AN IDENTITY BASED PERSPECTIVE ON GANGS:

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF CHANGE INVOLVED IN GANG RELATED TRANSITIONS

Laura Nicole Bolger

March 2021

The thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Forensic Psychology at the University of Portsmouth

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology at the University of Portsmouth, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award, however aspects of the thesis have been submitted as part of other assignments.

Word Count

Introduction: 2588

Chapter One: 8246

Chapter Two: 15036

Reflective Epilogue: 4324

Signature:

Date:

Sunday 22nd November 2020

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr Adrian Needs for your guidance and support throughout the project, especially for getting me back on track in a time of crisis. I am forever grateful for the knowledge and expertise you shared with me along the way.

To both my parents, and especially Dad for the additional hours of support, thank you for your constant support and encouragement during times of high stress. After several dropouts and career changes, I hope I have finally made you proud.

To Adam, thank you for endless cups of tea and constant motivation, but most importantly for believing in me when I struggled to believe in myself.

Thank you to my old friends for your patience, and the new friends I made along the way who were a constant source of laughter and strength.

And finally, thank you to the participants for taking the time to share their stories and make this research possible.

Dissemination

Article written for and published for 'The Psychologist' magazine and published online.

- Bolger, L. (2019). *Gangs- what can psychology offer?*

  https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/gangs-what-can-psychology-offer

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Abbreviations

CJS	Criminal Justice System
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
RNR	Risk Need Responsivity

Abstract

Rehabilitative interventions for adult gang members are notably lacking within the criminal justice system. Existing research suggests that more general programmes underpinned by Risk-Need-Responsivity Principles may be insufficient to address the complexities associated with gang membership, meaning specialist intervention is warranted. Where many scholars have focused on gangs as a youth phenomenon, understanding of the psychological processes that comprise the complex trajectories of those who extend their membership into adulthood is limited. With this in mind, the thesis adopts a qualitative approach to explore the individual trajectories of gang members, illuminating the psychological processes associated with change in this population to appreciate and comprehend their experience. Firstly, a systematic review of the qualitative literature identifies the mechanisms of change which underpin existing gang intervention programmes. Using meta-ethnography to synthesise data from 11 studies, 'Identity change' was identified as a mediating variable of gang interventions facilitated by the following mechanisms; 'Possible selves', 'Self-Construction vs Self-Discovery' and 'Immersion into roles.' The practical implications of using these mechanisms to inform a sequential framework for the delivery of gang intervention programmes are discussed. Secondly, the narratives of five ex-gang members were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the meaning attributed to their experience as they transitioned in and out of the gang. Super-ordinate themes of 'Positioning self in a social world', 'Solutions to identity, meaning and belonging, and 'Catalysts for change' shed light on the similarities and divergence across their experience and are discussed in respect of existing literature. Implications for policy, practice and future research are also discussed.

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

This thesis considers how the psychological processes of change experienced by gang members as they transition in and out of the gang can be used to inform tertiary gang intervention programmes to support the rehabilitation and desistance of adult gang members. It is structured in four parts. The first is this introduction which sets the scene for the research and identifies the rationale for the research undertaken.

Chapter one presents a systematic review of the qualitative literature on gang intervention programmes. Addressing the current gap between theory and practice, it advances knowledge of the mechanisms of change underpinning existing gang interventions that facilitate disengagement and desistance. Using meta-ethnography to synthesise data from 11 studies, 'Identity change' was identified as a mediating variable of gang interventions facilitated by the following mechanisms: 'Possible selves', 'Self-Construction vs Self-Discovery' and 'Immersion into roles.' The practical implications of using these mechanisms to inform. Where rehabilitative interventions for adult gang members are notably lacking, this chapter may inform policy and practice by considering how these mechanisms could be used to inform a sequential framework for the delivery of gang intervention programmes, allowing government to expand their existing anti-gang strategy through the funding, design and delivery of appropriate interventions to offer a more holistic solution.

Developing and broadening the notion of change to the wider life course, chapter two reports a phenomenological research study which uses interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore how five ex-gang members experience transitions into, and later out of

gangs. The identified themes offer insight into the way participants positioned themselves in a social world, how gangs offered solutions to psychological motives of identity, meaning and belonging, as well as the catalysts that sparked their decision to change**.** Contextualising the psychological processes evoked through these transitions, the chapter provides a unique insight into the multi-faceted life histories of men with lived experience of gang membership and facilitates a connection to the true meaning behind actions and decisions (Stevens, 2012). The chapter concludes by comparing the findings of both chapters and considers practical implications.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a short reflective epilogue that offers insight into the wider research process.

Setting the Scene

During his speech at the National Rifle Association in Dallas, US President Trump referenced knife crime in London, likening a prestigious city hospital to a "warzone" (Smith & Grierson, 2018). Whilst his comments caused outrage and criticism from politicians and eminent trauma surgeons as being factually inaccurate and overzealous, he is not the first to make this analogy. Media headlines such as '*This war won't end: London gang murders on this rise'* and '*Postcode wars have made London a murder capital'* are commonplace and academic researchers have compared gang violence and combat situations, specifically regarding experience of exploitation, initiations and inter and intra-group violence (Boothby & Thompson, 2013). Whilst there is an established argument that the media reporting is sensationalist and disproportionate (Hallsworth, 2013), current statistics indicate that UK gang violence has reached an unprecedented scale.

Given the media presentation of gang violence it is interesting to note that at the beginning of the 21st century, many Europeans denied the existence of street gangs because they failed to resemble American stereotypes of highly structured, cohesive and violent groups (Klein, 2001). However, by 2009, Britain had suffered an increase in gang culture and associated violence with 171 gangs identified in London alone (Centre for Social Justice, 2009). More recent statistics hold Britain's estimated 70,000 gang members responsible for a 36% rise in recorded knife crime (HM Government, 2018), 60% of shootings (Centre for Social Justice, 2018) and increased murders of young people between 2016 and 2018 (Kirchmaier & Villa-Llera, 2018).

From these statistics, violence is evidently an intrinsic element of gang membership. It is also inherently complex and damaging since it involves greater use of weapons, is more likely to occur in a public place, carries an increased risk of injury and victimisation, and often causes lasting psychological harm (Chu et al., 2012; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Peterson et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2008; Wood & Denard, 2017). Beyond violent crime, further links have been established between gang membership and participation in the supply of drugs (Adams & Pizarro 2014; Windle & Briggs, 2014), sexual violence (Nydegger et al., 2016) and exploitation of vulnerable individuals through 'county lines' drug trafficking (National Crime Agency, 2017). The organised crime gangs facilitating this higher-level activity cost the UK economy £37 billion annually ("Organised crime threat", 2018) and pose a greater threat to communities than terrorism (Dearden, 2018). Unsurprisingly, the Government, and other agencies, are under considerable pressure to identify and implement a solution (Sveinson, 2008).

The Government's 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence' strategy (2011) saw the implementation of early intervention and prevention strategies in 30 UK local authorities. They seek to identify and address the empirically based risk factors that predispose gang involvement (Pitts, 2017), preventing the problem before it arises (Boulton et al., 2019). With the risks and impact extending to children as young as seven in some communities (Waddell & Jones, 2018), individual, family, community and school-based interventions aim to develop children's social, emotional and communication skills, build positive relationships and offer support to families, target crime in the community and educate around the risks of gang involvement and youth violence (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 2019).

Despite the efforts of these programmes, questions of their effectiveness remain as communities still struggle to cope with gang related violence. In a yearly review, the Home Office concluded that the rollout of these initiatives was 'a success', yet closer examination by Smithson and Ralphs (2016) indicated this claim was unfounded and that robust evaluation was lacking in 29 of the 30 funded local authorities. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (2019) responded to this criticism, highlighting how the varied nature of the initiatives can pose difficulties for evaluation because of a lack of standard evaluation measures and the limited opportunity for longitudinal follow up. The contextual conditions in which the interventions are delivered, along with individual variations within the target audience raises further complexities, perhaps highlighting the need for realistic evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) before the development and implementation of Government policies.

A robust assessment of the efficacy of early intervention and prevention strategies is provided by O'Connor and Waddell (2015). Commissioned by the Home Office "to further our understanding of what works to prevent gang involvement" (O'Connor & Waddell, p.7), it is possible that the Government, aware of the limitations of their earlier initiatives, sought to better understand and address the problem. The review considered 67 programmes but identified no UK gang specific programmes underpinned by a robust evidence-base to assess their effectiveness. Many of the programmes identified as effective were implemented in the USA and literature in this area was also limited. Despite this, the review concluded that the most effective programmes were those that aimed to create positive changes in the lives of young people and their families, reduced risk factors and prevented further negative outcomes. Whilst these findings have some positive implications for the development of future evaluations, it is noteworthy the most effective programmes comprised general therapeutic approaches that addressed factors associated with gang membership. Both Functional Family Therapy (Gordon et al., 1995; Hansson et al., 2000; Sexton & Turner, 2010) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST) (Butler et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2014) had successful outcomes for youth involved in serious anti-social behaviour and delinquency. However, more recent research by Boxer et al., (2015) found that gang involvement significantly reduced the effectiveness of MST (Boxer et al., 2015). With earlier research highlighting the importance of reducing contact with delinquent peers to ensure successful MST outcomes (Huey et al., 2000), it may be that difficulties breaking these powerful social forces which bind gang members together indicate that specific adaptations to therapeutic approaches may be necessary for effective intervention with youths. But what about adults?

With the rise in serious youth violence (Home Affairs Committee: Serious Youth Violence, 2019), the push for Government initiatives and the relationship between gang

violence and youth violence often overlooked (Smithson & Ralphs, 2016), researchers and policy makers appear to have placed greater focus on understanding youth involvement in gangs as opposed to adult gang membership (Pyrooz, 2014). Whilst understandable given that risk of entering into gangs is heightened during adolescence (Howell & Egley, 2005) and the average length of involvement is approximately two years (Pyrooz, 2014), there is research indicating that gangs mature through extended membership (Leverso & Matsueda, 2019), and that trajectories of membership may extend into adulthood for a considerable subset of individuals (Pyrooz, 2014).

In his ethnographic research of UK gangs, Densley (2013) identified hierarchical subgroups categorised by age. Although he highlights that "violence is the key to maintaining leadership" (Densley, 2013. p75), he describes how more senior members of the gang tend to distance themselves because of their role in more sophisticated, organised criminal activities. Because of difficulties accessing this population, the literature on the pattern of offending amongst adult gang members is scarce making Densley's findings difficult to corroborate. However, it is increasingly recognised that organised criminal activities often involve grooming, exploitation and coercion of vulnerable individuals, for example, through involvement in County Lines drug dealing (Thompson, 2019). Focusing on gang membership as an exclusively adolescent domain distracts attention away from the potential role that adult gang members play in undermining the work of early intervention and prevention initiatives, raising questions as to how rehabilitation of this specific population may be pursued.

Current interventions that are more suited, but not exclusive to adult gang members, involve strategies aiming to suppress and control gang activity. Focused deterrence or 'pulling-levers' strategies have had positive outcomes (Wong et al., 2012) by "…reaching out

directly to gangs, saying explicitly that violence would no longer be tolerated, and backing the message by 'pulling every lever' legally available when violence occurs" (Braga et al., 2001, p.199).[1] Operation Ceasefire in Boston is the most notable example and these strategies are commonplace in the USA and are becoming increasingly common in the UK. Civil gang injunctions are an example of a strategy used to suppress UK gang activity, as are police led operations aiming to reduce gang-related violence and associated offending (Densley, 2013). Yet, despite heightened intelligence leading to an increased number of gang-member arrests, gang related violence continue to rise and the cycle continues (Densley, 2011), indicating that better evidence based interventions are necessary.

A New Perspective: Public Health Approach to Violence

In 2018, Mayor of London, Sadiq Kahn, announced plans to adopt a 'public health approach' in an attempt to address the issue of knife crime and violence within the capital (London Assembly, 2018). Adopting a public health approach to address rising rates of violence within societies is becoming increasingly commonplace (Gebo, 2016) with demonstrated success (Welsh et al., 2004). For example, Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit followed this model and saw a 47% reduction in homicide rates over a ten-year period (Bulman, 2018).

A public health approach is based on the premise that violence is preventable as long as the risk factors are identified and managed with appropriate interventions (World Health Organisation, n.d.). Reframing violence as a disease removes the onus for the criminal justice

[1] Pulling-levers strategies are problem-orientated policing strategies that follow core principles of deterrence theory (Braga, 2014).

system (CJS) to be solely responsible for managing the problem, encouraging a systematic approach where all agencies have a role to play in changing behaviour (Bolger, 2019).

Typically, any public health approach is spread across three levels. Gebo (2016) offers the first application of this framework to gang violence from primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Both primary and secondary prevention strategies align with current interventions described above and are a focus for youth violence. Tertiary prevention strategies aim to stop the violence through arrest, prosecution, imprisonment and rehabilitation of gang leaders and members who commit the most violence. However, tertiary prevention strategies are lacking in the CJS.

Looking beyond gangs momentarily, tertiary prevention strategies for non-gang involved offenders are synonymous with risk management. They include evidence-based, manualised programmes that have become the standard approach in CJS around the world. These programmes are underpinned by the 'what works' literature. The strongest evidence relates to the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural interventions that challenge offence related cognitions and teach skills including emotional regulation and perspective taking (Maruna & Mann, 2019). However, these programmes are unlikely to be sufficient to address the complexities associated with gang membership.

Gangs offer members a sense of belonging, pride, identity, social esteem and protection (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Goldstein, 2002; Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012; Vigil, 1988), resulting in strong and enduring ties which makes desistance challenging and risky for members (Pyrooz et al., 2014). In the context of their offending, the heightened social and emotional investment in the group often takes precedence over their own personal

gain (Wood, 2019) and the prevalence of mental health problems, specifically trauma-related symptomology (Kerig et al., 2016) may adversely affect their ability to engage with treatment programmes in a one-to-one or group setting (Akerman, 2018; Bailey et al., 2014). In the context of rehabilitation, these differences indicate the importance of considering gang members as a distinct subset of offenders with unique risk factors requiring specialist intervention (Wood, 2019). So what might this specialist intervention look like?

O'Connor and Waddell's (2015) review did not include specific intervention programmes to address gang-related offending for adults. That is not to say that they are not available, but the recency of these initiatives and lack of evaluative studies means that no conclusions can be drawn regarding their effectiveness, highlighting a significant gap: we do not know 'what works' for this particular group. In the absence of evidence, the development of intervention programmes becomes challenging, and in turn leads to difficulties in the development of policy. To support this, a major aim of the current thesis is to derive implications for the development of tertiary gang intervention programmes to support the rehabilitation and desistance of adult gang members.

The terms rehabilitation and desistance have been used interchangeably thus far. However, to embed the research in a specific theoretical context the distinction between them is relevant. *Rehabilitation* is a term more commonly adopted by psychologists and has drawn criticism for locating the problem within the individual by assuming that offenders require psychological treatment to return to a previous functional state (Ward et al., 2012). Criminologists prefer the term *desistance.* This refers to the cessation of offending, placing greater emphasis on the importance of self-narratives, and social and contextual factors for

behavioural change. In brief, rehabilitation is concerned with programmes whilst desistance is concerned with lives (Maruna & Mann, 2019).

Aims of Thesis

Adopting a solely rehabilitative stance in an intervention strategy to address the complex needs of gang members may be inadequate. The design and development of a treatment orientated programme risks reducing gang involvement to individual psychopathology and implies a 'fix' which is unattainable and unrealistic.

Whilst the available evidence indicates that gang members are a complex and distinct cohort of offenders, they are not a homogeneous population and the quantitative research fails to conceptualise the complexities of their personal trajectories both in and out of crime. In fact, the quantitative methodology underpinning evidence-based programmes would consider these narratives anecdotal or unrepresentative, meaning the value that desistance journeys of former gang-members may have on the development of interventions has been overlooked (Maruna & Mann, 2019). This is surprising given that collaboration with service users lies at the heart of psychological practice and is inconsistent with Farrall and Calverley's (2006) sentiment that desistance-focused work should be individualised. This is a particularly salient point when conceptualising gangs as a unique subset of offenders. To achieve an individualised approach, it is necessary to acquire a better understanding of the individual trajectories of gang members to properly appreciate and comprehend their experience. This is a focus which is notably absent from the wider gang literature yet represents the scope and purpose of the present thesis.

Positioned in an interpretivist paradigm, the thesis aims to take an initial step in identifying a theoretical framework for change by immersing the reader in the experience of ex-gang members and illuminating the psychological processes associated with change in this population.

CHAPTER ONE

Mechanisms of Change Underpinning Gang Intervention Programmes: A Systematic Review of the Qualitative Literature

The last few decades have benefitted from a wealth of research concerning the design and delivery of specialist psychological interventions for certain offending populations, most notably sex-offenders, perpetrators of intimate partner violence and extremists. However, the rehabilitation of adult gang members has received far less attention and our understanding of the processes involved in perpetuating gang membership is underdeveloped. The development of psychological intervention programmes must be underpinned by empirical evidence to establish "what works" (Hollin & Palmer, 2006). Andrews (1995) outlined in his principles of effective practice, that this must include an understanding of the dynamic risk factors associated with offending behaviour used to underpin the aims and objectives of the intervention in line with the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR; 2007). Whilst much of the existing gang literature focuses on at-risk or gang-involved youth, evidence alluding to the treatment needs of adult gang members is scarce.[2]

In the absence of specialist interventions, gang-involved individuals in the CJS are subject to interventions aiming to address the criminogenic needs associated with gang activity. There are only two published studies that explore the efficacy of violence interventions with gang members. For example, in America the Aggressive Behaviour Control (ABC) programme, a high intensity cognitive behavioural intervention, has been evaluated as an effective programme by the National Gang Centre (n.d). In the single study exploring the application of ABC with gang members, participation in the programme was

[2] Hereafter, the terms 'gang member' and 'ex-gang member' will refer to adults unless stated otherwise.

associated with reduced recidivism in a 24 month period (Di Placido et al., 2006). Similarly, only one study explores the application of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) with gang members. It found reduced arrest rates among violent gang populations in large urban areas, although this study refers to juveniles rather than adults (Goldstein, 1994). Consequently, the success of the programme was likely based on the fact that ART was designed for adolescents. More recent research indicates that application of the same intervention with adult offenders failed to demonstrate a reduction in reoffending (Brännström et al., 2016; Lardén et al., 2018). In the UK, RESOLVE and the Self Change Programme are the subject of unpublished doctoral research by Tonks (2018). She found that gang members did experience some benefits from both generalised violence interventions and had made treatment gains in impulsivity, anger, aggression and vengeful thinking.

Underpinned by RNR principles, these programmes indicate that well-known principles of offender rehabilitation have a role in the design and development of gang interventions (Meng-Chu et al., 2011). However, these principles may be deficient as they fail to account for the role of group processes influencing the behaviour, attitude and cognitions of gang members (Wood, 2014). As Klein (2014, p.701) states, “gangs are groups, not merely aggregations of individual gang members” and these manualised programmes could be perceived as reductionist if they fail to account for the meaning of behaviour within a gang context where offending is often motivated by group identification and loyalty (Hennigan et al., 2015). Similarly, measuring the efficacy of programmes in terms of recidivism (Maruna & Mann, 2019) does not necessarily equate to gang disengagement. Addressing anger issues, aggression and violent attitudes of individuals is only part of the puzzle; rehabilitative programmes also need a component to address the beliefs and values of the gang to facilitate desistance.

A Review of Existing Gang Intervention Programmes

Custody.

There is currently one accredited psychological intervention programme available in the UK for adult males whose offending is motivated by their identification with gangs. Delivered one-to-one by psychologists, 'Identity Matters' seeks to prevent individuals from committing further gang-affiliated offences whilst empowering participants to disengage from gang life. The programme has been subject to one small scale evaluative study which suggested some positive change regarding participants' expectations of desistance. However, the absence of a control group, small sample size and use of measures that had not been validated for use with this population mean the findings must be treated with caution (Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019). The efficacy of the intervention in achieving its purpose of enabling offenders to develop a more positive identity is not clear from Randhawa-Horne et al.'s study. Nor can we conclude whether completion of the programme leads to primary or secondary desistance.[3] Yet, as the only accredited programme for gang members in the UK, the programme will undoubtedly be included in the sentence plans of many, either in the prison estate or under probation. From a rehabilitative perspective this implies that government believes these programmes can provide a 'fix' to gang membership. It locates the cause of the problem within the individual or, more specifically, their identity, something which may instigate a defensive reaction in those whose identification as a gang member is still strong, impeding any potential treatment engagement (Klein, 2014).

[3] Primary desistance referring to a period of non-offending and secondary desistance to a change in self-identity where the individual no longer considers themselves an offender (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016).

Whilst Identity Matters recognises the importance of identity in enduring gang membership (Leverso & Matsueda, 2019) and seeks to address the underlying risk factors associated with violence behaviour (Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019), to what extent can a structured and manualised programme delivered across 19 sessions truly assist with re-negotiating an individual's sense of self? The mechanisms involved in this identity shift are not clear in Randhawa-Horne et al.'s study. However, identity is a complex and multi-faceted construct that develops over time as the individual interacts with their own social world. Without the opportunity to trial and consolidate a new identity, the long-term benefits of the intervention may be significantly reduced.

Community.

Gang rehabilitation is notably more advanced in America, arguably reflecting the chronic nature of their gang problem (Valasik & Reid, 2020). Where psychological input is limited, the arena has expanded beyond the realms of the CJS and is dominated by third-sector organisations whose interventions focus on empowering the individual through the enhancement of social capital (Martin et al., 2016). Homeboy Industries, for example, an independent non-profit organisation dedicated to gang recovery, is reportedly the largest gang recovery intervention in America with annual revenue of $16.5m (Homeboy Industries, 2016). The programme aims to facilitate desistance through employment and skill development, as well as spiritual and therapeutic programmes (Flores, 2016) and has become a blueprint for 400 organisations globally (Global Homeboy Network, n.d). With no empirical evidence supporting the programme's efficacy, the success of the intervention is anecdotal yet the component parts work to develop empirically established protective factors that introduce stability and structure into people's lives (Berger et al., 2017).

Community initiatives run by faith-based organisations are also popular in America (Braga et al., 2008; Flores & Cossyleon, 2016), the UK (Armstrong, Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016) and the Caribbean (Maguire & Gordon, 2015) due to the inverse relationship between religion and crime (Johnson & Schroeder, 2014). The nature of these programmes is varied, but all seek to mitigate involvement in gangs by connecting participants to their religious roots (Berger et al., 2017). The Ten Point Coalition, for example, acts as an intermediary institution between the police and other agencies within the CJS (Maguire & Gordon, 2015). Victory Outreach and Targeted Against Gangs both draw on Pentecostalism as a means of redefining notions of gang masculinity to facilitate desistance (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016; Flores & Cossyleon, 2016).

From the above discussion the researcher feels tertiary gang interventions are diverse in nature but do share some similarities. Many operate as 'pull factors', offering hooks to restructure the gang member lifestyles (Pyrooz & Decker, 2011) and provide them a chance to reinvent themselves (Maruna & Roy, 2007). However, the recency of implementation of many of these initiatives means there is a distinct lack of evidence confirming their efficacy and it is difficult to draw conclusions as to what interventions might work best within this unique population. Whilst an important step in developing evidence-based practice and ensuring successful outcomes, gathering such evidence would likely be a drawn-out process requiring longitudinal studies to offer certainty of long-term desistance. However, this does not satisfy the immediate need to address rising rates of gang-related violence and the consequent impact on communities. Accordingly, there is a need for rapid research that has some utility in advancing the field of gang rehabilitation in a responsive and useful manner. Furthermore, focusing on recidivism alone fails to tell us how offender rehabilitation works. One way to solve this challenge is to move beyond the study of efficacy and instead consider

the underlying mechanisms and processes that result in therapeutic change (Johansson & Høglend, 2007; Kazdin, 2007; Kraemer et al., 2002).

Mechanisms of Change

There have been ongoing efforts to understand the mechanisms of change in various psychological therapies including cognitive-behavioural therapy (Crits-Christoph et al., 2018; Fang et al., 2020; Lemmens et al., 2017), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (Bortiz et al., 2018), psychodynamic therapy (Leichsenring et al., 2018), schema therapy (Renner et al., 2018) and motivational interviewing (Apodaca & Longabaugh, 2010). Further attempts have sought to understand the mechanisms of change underpinning offence-focused interventions by measuring in-treatment change of dynamic risk factors. However, the criterion measure of these studies is recidivism (Bowen et al., 2008; Kroner & Yessine, 2013; Yesberg & Polaschek, 2019). For this reason Johansson and Høglend (2007) would argue that these studies are more concerned with mediators of change, defined as the intervening variable that accounts for the relationship between the intervention and outcome, such as changes in cognitions, abilities or functioning. This tells us little about the steps that lead to change. Instead possible mechanisms might include changes in self-understanding (Connolly-Gibbons et al., 2009) and therapeutic alliance (Forster et al., 2014).

The Current Review

The importance of advancing theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of change is noted by Forster et al., (2014) and Kazdin (2007), who argue that identification of these mechanisms means the salient aspects of an intervention can be preserved and replicated to facilitate the development of more effective treatments. Given the diverse nature of gang intervention programmes delivered in custody and the community, closer examination of

these mechanisms might lead to greater consensus regarding the design and delivery of subsequent initiatives. The review seeks to address the gap between theory and practice by advancing understanding of how existing gang intervention programmes work, specifically by identifying the mechanisms of change that facilitate disengagement and desistance.

There are currently no published systematic reviews investigating the mechanisms of change in tertiary gang intervention programmes, highlighting a need to review and synthesise relevant studies that might offer insights into the way these programmes work. A scoping review highlighted that much of the research exploring tertiary gang intervention programmes is grounded in qualitative methodology. This research adds a further conceptual layer by considering the views of those who have been able to desist from gang life with the support of tertiary initiatives (Maruna & Mann, 2019). In addition, systematically reviewing the available evidence could also help inform policy and practice, allowing the Government to expand their existing anti-gang strategy through the funding, design and delivery of appropriate interventions to offer a more holistic solution.

Method

Scoping Search

A brief scoping search was conducted to help refine the review question and determine the volume and suitability of the literature available for synthesis. Information obtained during the search informed the development of the protocol. The author intended to register the review with the Campbell Collaboration however time constraints meant this was not possible.

Search Strategy

The conduct and report of the review adhered to the principles outlined by Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, Liberati et al., 2009). Once the review question had been established, six electronic databases (EBSCO Host, Psycinfo, Scopus, Web of Science, gov.uk and Ethos) were searched for relevant published and unpublished literature between 1st January 1990 and 12th October 2019 using the following search syntax:

1. Gang and gang mem*

   AND

   Interven* OR therap* OR program* or rehab*

The scoping search highlighted that reporting of qualitative research within the specified databases was inconsistent. Little information in the title or abstract gave a limited indication of the research design, therefore, no qualitative filters were included in the search syntax. To increase the sensitivity and specificity of the search, additional filters were used to stipulate that search terms were identified in the study title and abstract only. Each database was searched individually, and all articles were imported into Mendeley Desktop reference software, which identified duplicates that were reviewed and removed manually. The search was completed in October 2019.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Following the initial search, the author independently screened all titles and abstracts. Any relevant studies were retained according to the inclusion criteria identified in Table One.

Where the author was unable to identify the suitability of the article from the title and abstract, the full text paper was retained.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

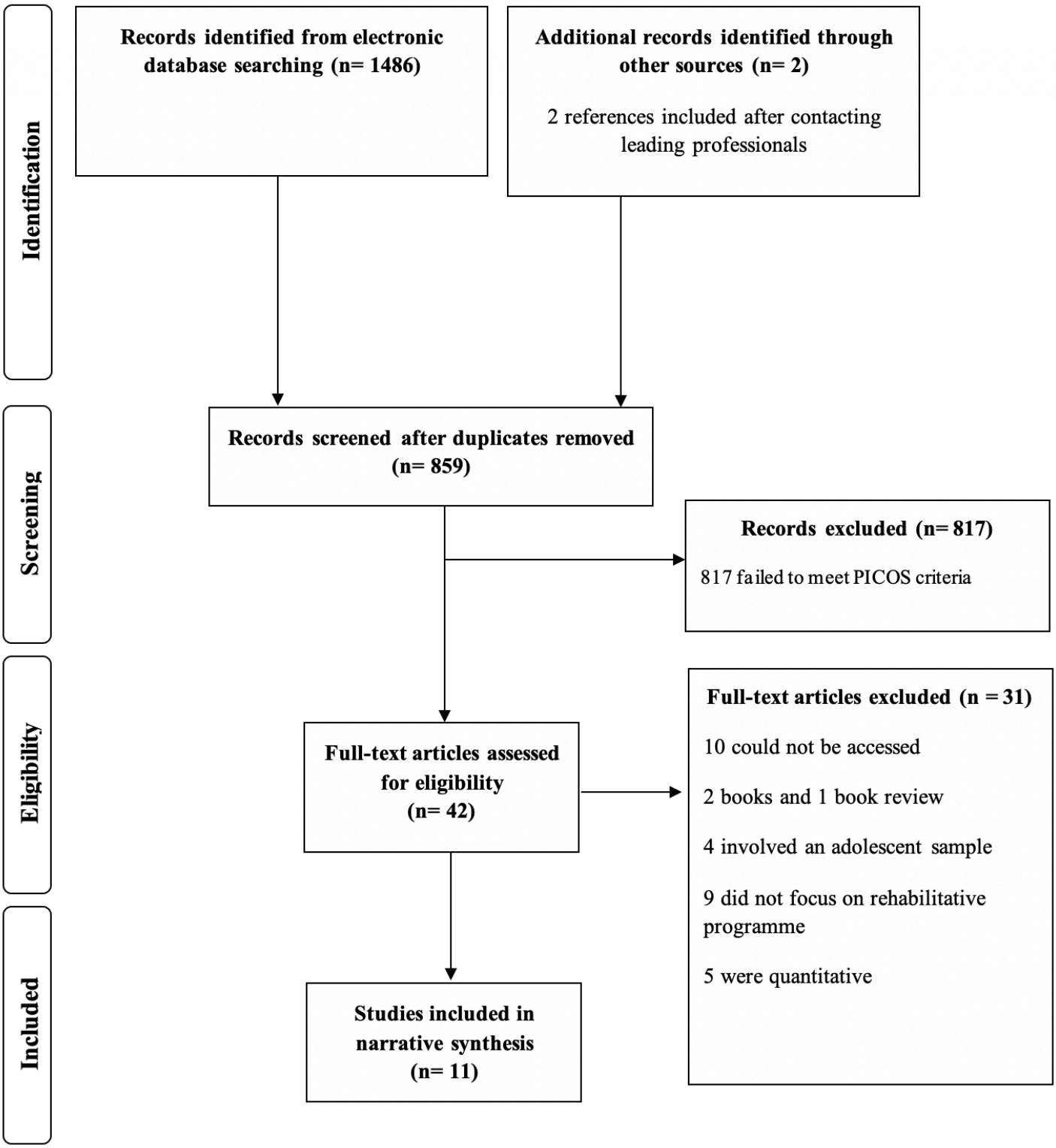
	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Individuals identifying as gang members Both male and female 18+ Any ethnicity	Those 'at risk' of gang involvement Children and adolescents
Intervention	Interventions designed to rehabilitate gang members	Preventative interventions Gang suppression and control strategies First-response interventions Opportunities provisions
Outcome	A change in thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards gang membership Disengagement or desistance from gangs and elimination of associated offending	
Study Design	Qualitative studies Mixed methods studies will be included but only qualitative findings synthesised	
Setting	Custody and the community Delivered by any service provider Inside and outside of the UK	There will be no exclusion criteria due to the broad and

	varied nature of current gang interventions.

Results

1486 citations were identified during the initial search. Contact was made with a number of experts in the field to identify other potentially relevant studies, leading to the identification of two additional citations. Once duplicates were removed, 859 citations remained and were screened for inclusion (Figure One). Their titles and abstracts were assessed according to their relevance to the review (Stage 1). 817 articles were excluded as they did not meet the PICOS criteria, leaving 42 full-text articles to be reviewed during Stage 2. All 42 articles underwent a full text screening to assess their eligibility against the inclusion criteria leading to the further exclusion of 31 articles; ten could not be located or accessed by the author or her university, four involved an adolescent sample of participants, nine did not focus on rehabilitative programmes, five used quantitative analysis, two were books and one was a book review. This left eleven citations for inclusion in the systematic review.

Figure One. *Study Selection Process*



Quality Appraisal

The critical appraisal of qualitative evidence synthesis has been subject to academic debate (Carroll & Booth, 2015). The philosophical and epistemological diversity of qualitative research has led some to argue that methods designed for use in quantitative reviews are redundant in this context. However, the expansion of qualitative evidence in recent years highlights a need to understand whether qualitative evidence is "good enough" to inform synthesis and practice (Britten et al., 2011). Guidance from the Cochrane Qualitative and Implementation Methods Group provides that qualitative evidence should be appraised "according to several domains…including reporting, methodological rigour and conceptual depth and breadth (Hannes, 2011), whilst the relevance of additional criteria, including context, the reviewer's perspective, and study utility, is recognised by others (Garside, 2014; Toye et al., 2013; Pawson et al., 2005). In accordance with these recommendations, this study includes a critical appraisal stage to ensure all included studies met a minimum standard of research quality (Hannes, 2011). To achieve this, the author adopts a position of quasi-foundationalism, drawing upon quality criteria that are unique to qualitative enquiry (Denzin, 2009).

At the time of writing, there remains no standard appraisal for qualitative evidence synthesis. To select an appropriate tool, the author drew on Majid & Vanstone's (2018) 'Appraisal Tool Guide'. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) was chosen as the author considered herself a novice qualitative researcher, and time constraints imposed by the doctoral process warranted a short and easy-to-follow tool. Additionally, the CASP is the most commonly used appraisal tool in the process of qualitative evidence synthesis and was not specific to any particular discipline (Dalton et al.,

2017). This was considered advantageous as the included studies emerged from a multi-disciplinary body of literature including psychology, criminology and sociology.

The CASP qualitative checklist evaluates articles according to three overarching themes; validity, results and clinical significance. All ten items were considered relevant and the published checklist was used.[4] For every item, each article was scored if the quality criterion was met (score=2), not clear (score=1) or not met (score=0). As the selected studies emerged from a multi-disciplinary body of literature, the purpose of the quality appraisal checklist was to ensure that all studies met a minimum standard of research quality rather than for exclusion (O'Connor et al., 2018). The final item, clinical value, was descriptive and not scored in the same way.

All studies were quality assessed by the author. To ensure inter-rater reliability, a second researcher assisted with the review of five of the included studies which were selected at random. The second researcher was independent to the research project and not involved in any other aspects of the thesis but had a doctoral qualification and demonstrated full understanding of the quality appraisal stage.[5]

Data Extraction

The raw data underpinning a qualitative systematic review challenges the conventional principles of data extraction typical for quantitative synthesis (Booth et al., 2016). Qualitative evidence synthesis is based on the identification of ideas and concepts which should remained grounded in the primary studies before comparisons can be drawn

[4] See Appendix A
[5] The results of the quality assessment can be found in Appendix B

across the body of included studies. The notion of 'extract once, read multiple times' was considered unsuitable and risked de-contextualising the findings (Booth et al., 2016). Instead, the author followed guidance from Pawson et al. (2004), reading through each source multiple times to identify emerging themes. NVivo12 software was used systematically to identify information relevant to the research question. The author adopted a holistic approach, reading the body of literature without interruption whilst coding conceptual findings in each paper as they emerged (Toye et al., 2014).

Synthesis

Cited as one of the most prevalent methods of qualitative evidence synthesis (Booth et al., 2016), meta-ethnography was selected as the most appropriate framework. Meta-ethnography is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm and seeks to preserve the social and theoretical contexts in which the findings emerge (Noblit & Hare, 1988). This was considered valuable as the included studies were grounded in sociology, criminology and psychology, highlighting the need to understand the findings in relation to each specific context. Atkins et al., (2008) describe how meta-ethnography allows a more sophisticated analysis of the data, allowing for the development of an explanatory theory or model. Given that the current review hopes to identify policy and practice implications within the field of gang rehabilitation, pursuing a line of argument synthesis was conducive to any emergent theories which could underpin the development of future interventions.

Meta-ethnography synthesis involves four stages whereby the interpretations and explanations in the original studies are treated as data, before comparison were drawn and themes matched to generate new 'third order' constructs (Jamal et al., 2013; Urrieta & Noblit, 2018). The process of synthesis is detailed below.

Step one: Reading and re-reading.

Following data extraction, each study was read multiple times in order to allow full immersion in the data. The author used memos to highlight 'second order constructs', which Schutz (1962) defines as the researcher's interpretation of the data, regarding the mechanisms of change. Some of the studies offered direct participant quotations, but caution was exercised in categorising these as 'first order' constructs as they were selected by the authors of the studies and do not reflect the totality of participant experiences (Atkins et al., 2008). Many of the papers offered a descriptive rather than interpretative account making it difficult to fully identify first-order constructs. Only one study by Arocha (2015), an unpublished thesis, detailed first order constructs in the results chapter. For the remaining articles, the author used memos to consider how these interpretations aligned with identified second order constructs.

Step two: Determining how the studies are related.

To determine how the studies were related, they were grouped according to the interventions explored in each study. Comparisons of the initial themes and concepts identified in stage one were further developed and reconceptualised to create a refined list of key ideas and concepts (see Figure Two).

Steps three and four: Translation and synthesis of studies.

Using reciprocal translation, these second order constructs were compared across studies to identify shared meanings, leading to the identification of third order constructs which were synthesised using the 'line of argument' method to offer a conceptual explanation of the mechanisms of change underpinning gang intervention programmes.

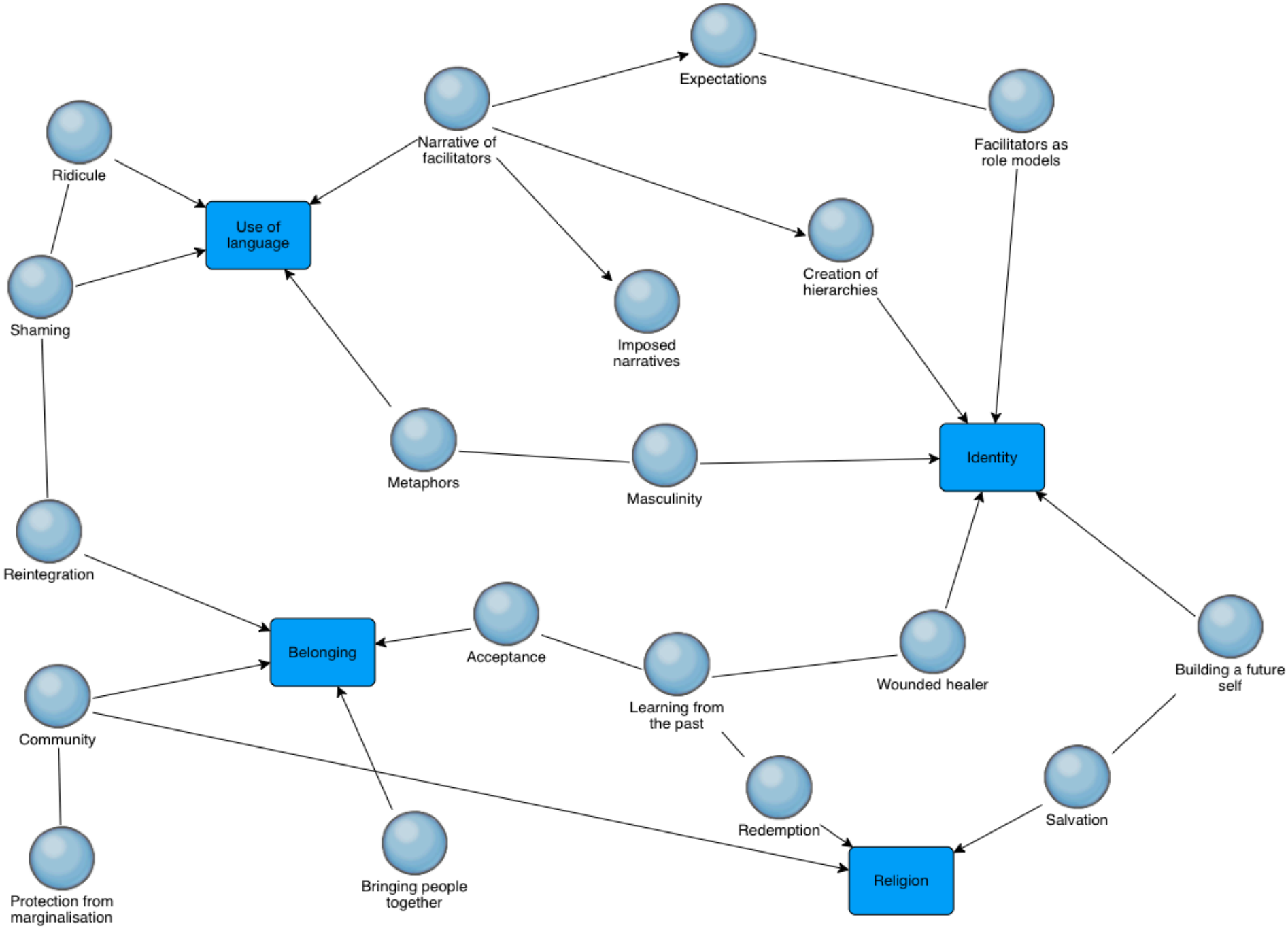


Figure Two. *Conceptual map of second and third order constructs displayed using Nvivo software*

Results and Discussion

Study Characteristics

The 11 selected sources were published between 2013 and 2019. Samples consisted of gang members engaged with interventions and, in some cases, those involved with the facilitation of the programme. Descriptive characteristics are displayed in table two.

Before discussing the proposed mechanisms of change, outlining the intended intervention outcomes is helpful. Generally, each intervention sought to reduce affiliation and involvement with gangs. Identity Matters was unique in seeking to reduce gang related offending (Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019), whilst Changing The Game was therapeutic in nature, aiming to provide participants with a space to share and understand their own narrative (Kassman & Milne, 2018). The remaining interventions had the broader aim of facilitating desistance through the enhancement of social capital, reflecting the distinction between the role criminal justice agencies and third-sector organisations.

Table 2

Descriptive characteristics of included studies.

Study	Intervention	Cultural Context	Methodology	Analysis
Akerman, n.d	Changing the Game	England	Focus Groups	Thematic Analysis
Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016	Targeted Against Gangs (TAG)	England	Ethnography	Not specified
Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson, 2017	Targeted Against Gangs (TAG)	England	Ethnography	Not specified
Arocha, 2015	Homeboy Industries	America	Ethnography	Not explicit – possible thematic analysis
Deuchar, Søgaard, Kolind, Thylstrup and Wells , 2016	New Start	Denmark	Ethnography	Not explicit – possible thematic analysis
Deuchar and Weide, 2019	New Start Homeboy Industries Violence Reduction Unit	America, Denmark and Scotland	Ethnography	Not specified
Geraghty and Akerman, 2017	Changing the Game	England	Focus Groups	Thematic analysis

Flores, 2016	Homeboy Industries Victory Outreach	America	Ethnography	Extended case method
Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013	Homeboy Industries Victory Outreach	America	Ethnography	Extended case method
Mørck, 2014	People's College	Denmark	Adapted ethnography	Uses social practice analytical framework of expansive learning.
Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019	Identity Matters	England	Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups	Thematic Analysis

Identified Mechanisms of Change

"Identity change" emerged as a clear super-ordinate theme, demonstrating how these programmes facilitated desistance. Three further sub-ordinate themes were identified relating to the specific mechanism which facilitate a change in identity; "Possible selves", "Self-Construction vs Self-Discovery" and "Immersion into roles".

Identity change.

In line with Kazdin's (2007) conceptual distinction between mediators and mechanisms, identity change is a mediating variable of gang intervention programmes. The re-negotiation of identity is an overarching theme in all eleven studies yet features more explicitly in some. Identity Matters is based upon the concept of an identity shift where participants are encouraged to reflect on their lives and their future before considering how to develop a more positive identity. This is reflected in the statement of one participant; "*it helped me look carefully at what I want to achieve in life and the things that affected me before*" (Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019, p.16). Similarly, whilst the aim of the programme for Changing the Game was not specifically to facilitate an identity shift, participants are afforded the opportunity to construct and share personal narratives and feel understood and valued by others (Kassman & Milne, 2008). In the community, a change in identity is contingent upon social circumstances where the structure and format of the interventions gave participants hope about who they might become. This is evident in Arocha's (2015) study where one participant says "*I do have a future. I see myself living as a productive member of society*" (p.61), and another says:

> "*Well, tomorrow I'm going places, as far as being free, living the way I want to life, and as far as enjoying my life, enjoying myself and becoming my own man instead of*

another person trying to use me…trying to control me and tell me what to do and how to live my life. But now I'm breaking free from all of that thanks to Homeboy Industries" (p.55).

These men no longer feel constrained by their ties to the gang and develop their own sense of self as a result of programme participation.

Considering how these intervention programmes seek to facilitate the re-negotiation of identity, the following mechanisms emerge and are discussed below.

Possible Selves.

According to Markus & Nurius (1986; p. 954), possible selves are the representations of "individual's ideas about what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming". The creation of a possible self acts as a template where goals, hopes, ideals and expectations are formulated and used to motivate personal development (Ashforth, 2001; Wurf & Markus, 1991).

In six studies, possible selves are based on the re-negotiation and subsequent expression of masculinity underpinning the desistance process (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016; Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2017; Arocha, 2015; Flores, 2016; Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). Drawing on hegemonic masculinity, these authors acknowledge how the hyper-masculine environment of the gang reinforces the construction of a dominant masculine identity, offering individuals a sense of power and protection from the stigmatisation and marginalisation they experience within the wider community. The essence of this is captured by Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson (2016) who observe how

"*the notion of 'manhood' was integral to the work of TAG as it was to the ambitions of those it challenged*" (p.32). Rather than relinquishing this aspect of the self that has proved so valuable across their lifespan, the intervention programmes at the centre of these six studies (Homeboy Industries, Victory Outreach, TAG and the Danish boxing programme) offer (ex) gang-members new ways to "do masculinity" in a pro-social manner, providing a template on which the future self can be built. This is emphasised by Deuchar et al. (2016) where one participant states:

> "*The way I see it if you adjust your head to it and you say that's what you want…well then you will do anything to reach your goal…if you fight for it, if that's what you want then there is a new way*" (p.737).

Whilst having previously constructed his masculinity through crime, engagement in the programme allowed this participant to build an alternative masculinity based on his own determination to desist (Connell, 2005).

With the pro-social manifestation of these ideals being discordant with the values and ideals held as a gang member, retaining a sense of masculinity provides continuity and coherence between their past self and possible self. This is important given individuals generally strive to achieve and maintain a sense of self-continuity, and threats to this are associated with negative personal and societal outcomes (Becker et al., 2018). Where hegemonic masculinity has emerged for those in gangs who have been marginalised by society as a protective function (Glynn, 2014), attempts to repress or eliminate this during any intervention is likely to fuel the existing negative intergroup attitudes and further perpetuate identification to the gang. Where this aspect of identity was salient in gang

membership, re-negotiating masculinity in a way that retains salience in the process of desistance fosters stability between the past and present self where previous traits are accepted. Vignoles et al. (2017) referred to the 'associative links to one's past', where individuals derive a sense of self-continuity from prior thoughts, feelings and actions whilst constructing new narratives. Indeed, when reflecting on a conversation with one participant in his study Arocha (2015, p.80) notes how well Homeboy Industries helped men to "embrace their past", teaching that "the past was not something to run from, but part of their lives from which they could learn".

The interventions explored in the other five studies rely less on masculine ideals, allowing participants to generate their own templates for possible selves through exposure to new ideas and opportunities (Dunkel, 2000). Although detail in Randhawa-Horne et al.'s (2019) study is scant, facilitators play an important role in assisting participants to formulate their own positive identity. One participant in their study stated, "*I think my facilitator's approach to this work was very helpful because I found her to be patient and understand*" (p.19). Other participants said "*it showed me that I don't have to be anyone else but me*" (p.17), and "*I've had a chance to see where things had gone wrong in my life and the future I can have if I work hard and keep a positive attitude*" (p.18), suggesting the programme enables participants to generate numerous possibilities based on their own self-narratives which then alters how they think about themselves (Cross & Markus, 1991; Roberts & Creary, 2012). Danish initiative 'People's College' (Mørck, 2014) takes a holistic and systemic approach where a possible self is generated through 'expansive learning', a process allowing the individual to create new life trajectories following access to "meaningful activities, belonging in communities, and things to do that oneself, one's parents, mentors and new brotherhoods can be proud of" (p.493).

When positioned within Marcia's (1966) identity status model, these findings indicate the constructive process of creating one's own identity may begin with the generation of future possibilities (Dunkel, 2000). By opening avenues to explore and develop possible selves, gang-intervention programmes initiate a phase of identity moratorium, where people actively explore their options without making a decision or commitment. However, identity exploration can lead to negative outcomes such as anxiety and self-doubt (Kidwell et al., 1995; Schwartz et al., 2009), especially when there remains disparity between the old self and possible self. Several participants recognise the impact this has on the desistance process. For example, Deuchar et al. (2016) note how one young man engaged on New Start aspired towards a 'normal life' but experienced a sense of dejection, unable to attain the standard bearers of adult masculinity; "*but I don't have a normal life, I don't have work, a home, I don't have a car, I don't have any of these things"*(p. 732). The disappointment and guilt at failing to realise the possible self is also acknowledged by one participant at Homeboy Industries. Drawn back into gang activity after being let go from the intervention due to budget shortfalls, he said:

> *"I don't even feel like a man no more homes. I kick it with a jaina (woman) and I can't even pay for dinner, you know what I mean? …she realises I ain't about shit. I don't got no feria (money) and I can't contribute"* (Deuchar & Weide, 2019, p.856).

As they attempt to transition into pro-social roles, participants are unable to reconcile their need for control, impeding their ability to internalise the role as an authentic expression of the self (Ashforth, 2001). This point of identity crisis reflects the struggles associated with the desistance process as individuals attempt to distance themselves from a singular

perspective, yet the potential for growth and development if they can work through this in a positive manner should not be underestimated (Côté, 2018). This is demonstrated by the participant in Mørck's (2014) study. Still affiliated with the gang at the point of entry into the intervention, he states, "*I still have one leg in the gang community. The thing I fear the most is to lose my social network…I am unsure if this is the way I want to go"* (p.491). However, after generating a possible self from establishing a friendship with his mentor and engaging in meaningful activities, he can move forward and actualise the steps to his new identity; "*You have to say no to friends you grew up with. I also have to keep relatives at a distance and say goodbye to my whole life. I do not have the same interests as my friends anymore"* (p.492). In comparison, failing to work through an identity crisis positively may result in a return to gang activity with lifelong consequences (Côté, 2018). This is illustrated by Deuchar and Weide (2019) who describe how one participant of Homeboy Industries reverted to associating with his prior gang cohort after being let go due to budget shortfalls and was subsequently shot and partially paralysed. This is an extreme example but demonstrates the importance of interventions acknowledging the struggles individuals might face during the identity exploration phase, emphasising the need for adequate structure and support to help them move forward.

Self-construction versus self-discovery.

The second mechanism addresses how possible selves are constructed through gang intervention programmes. This can be conceptualised according to a continuum. On the left are interventions which use specific methods to impose an idealised masculine identity upon participants, whilst the opposing end represents programmes where the possible self encompasses broader traits and qualities. This continuum has parallels with the self-construction and self-discovery perspectives of identity development, with both viewpoints

representing different mechanisms of identity change as a result of the interaction between the self and one's social context (Schwartz, 2002). The two are not mutually exclusive yet differ in their understanding of a 'true self". Where the self-discovery perspective implies the existence of a true self that can be discovered through activities it reflects, the self-constructivist perspective rejects the concept of a true self. Instead, it implies that the self is only realised once an individual has processed, evaluated and assimilated salient aspects of social ideologies, context and interpersonal styles into a coherent identity (Berzonsky, 2016; Schwartz, 2002).

Self-discovery.

As detailed above, three of the interventions use traditional and societal ideals of masculinity to generate ideas on which participants can base their possible selves. Flores (2016) observes how Homeboy Industries and Victory Outreach promote the "dominant masculine expressions" of "the family man" and "man of God" respectively. This idealised self is less explicit in TAG, yet participants are still encouraged to channel their skills into legitimate pursuits that benefit families and communities (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016; 2017). This aligns with the self-discovery perspective of identity where the true self is perceived to be consistent with masculine ideals achieved through engagement in activities that resonate or reflect it (Schwartz, 2002). This is evident at Victory Outreach where participants are able to partake in "ecstatic displays of spirituality" in church (Flores, 2016, p.600), whilst at Homeboy Industries participants are able to engage in Parenting Classes (Flores & Hondagneu, 2013).

These interventions operate in a directed way using religious principles and language to invoke shame and ridicule their members. Victory Outreach is rooted in Pentecostalism, a

protestant Christian movement adhering to the model of hegemonic masculinity; facilitators and programme leaders preach as a primary method of communicating with participants, admonishing gang behaviour and rendering (ex)gang-members as subordinate to the masculine ideals embedded within Pentecostal religiosity. Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2013, p.9) observe how leaders at Victory Outreach described gang members as being "*in the stronghold of the devil*", using satire to mock and chastise participants, undermining their sense of self. TAG, underpinned by Pentecostal principles, and Homeboy Industries, a Catholic-Jesuit movement, operate in a similar manner but rely less on perspicuous religiosity to lecture the futility of gang activity. They single out and rebuke the experiences of participants to undermine their gang identities; "*None of you are big time gangsters out there…you're involved in random shooting and stabbing, and that's not gangster…real gangster's don't feud over a £5 debt*" (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016, p.28). Facilitators also impose their own views; "*You think it's fun, and you think it's fun, and you think it's fun. But it ain't fun! It's not fun*!" (Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013, p.11), and emasculate participants by rendering gang masculinity as inferior to traditional expressions. One facilitator at Homeboy Industries uses homosexuality and asks participants "*if they preferred to be lined up 'dick to ass' with prison inmates*" (Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, p.11).

These masculine ideals are further embodied by facilitators who draw heavily on their own personal narratives. Facilitators at Victory Outreach reportedly "*acted as secular priests or spiritual leaders*" (Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013, p.12), "*wearing full suits for church events and embodying the 'health and wealth gospel*' of the Protestant church" (Flores, 2016, p.596), placing themselves at the top of organisational hierarchies and acting as role models to inspire participants. Some facilitators use their narratives to draw on the process of

recovery to shape the experience of members, indicating how these masculine ideals can be embodied. One Homeboy Industries facilitator shares his personification of the family man, talking about his attendance at night school for his drug counselling certificate to secure a consistent financial income to support his family (Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013). This is comparable to other Homeboy Industries facilitators who refer to themselves as "family men".

To some extent these techniques promoting masculine ideals might instigate a default individualisation trajectory, where participants become passive receptors of environmental and contextual influences and may subsequently fail to develop a sense of purpose or self-direction (Erikson, 1950; Kerpelman et al., 1997). The passivity of participants when faced with this rhetoric is noted by Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2013, p.9) describing "younger members sat intensely quiet", further bolstered by the message of salvation underpinning religious interventions where participants are saved from premature death (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016) and gang life (Flores, 2016). This places the individual at risk of identity foreclosure where they believe they have established a sense of self, but are unable to sustain this over time, creating barriers within their own desistance journey (Schwartz, 2002). Where the ethnographic methodology of some included studies lacks insight into the experience of participants, hypothetically it might reflect why many young men at Homeboy Industries struggle against the temptation towards reoffending. As gang members are not a homogeneous cohort (Densley, 2012; 2013), it is possible that not everyone will aspire to the traditional ideals of 'the family man' or 'man of god' depending on their own familial, religious or cultural orientation and the shame-inducing techniques may induce a sense of personal failure, causing them to adopt this idealised identity to alleviate any cognitive dissonance (Harris & Maruna, 2005). Alternatively, the induction of shame may operate as an

entirely different mechanism; participants may become motivated to address negative self-perceptions and emotions and engage in social activates and skills development (De Hooge et al., 2011). The reintegrative aspect of these programmes, and continued support through employment, skill development and therapeutic offerings, helps sustain an approach behaviour where the individual is able to develop and affirm a more positive self-view with fewer difficulties. Further exploration of this is warranted.

Whilst the structure and format of New Start differs from Victory Outreach, Homeboy Industries and TAG, the Danish boxing programme also operates from a perspective of self-discovery where individuals intuitively engage in activities and roles that fit with existing and idealised views of the self (Schwartz, 2006). The intervention is set in the context of a boxing gym, but one of the facilitators notes "…*they won't come over to the boxing, they will go to the weights and do weights. Because they are in their comfort zone there*" (Deuchar et al. 2016; p.734). The authors explain how "the young men gravitated towards activities that enabled expression of the key markers of a hegemonic masculinity (physicality, strength and power through weightlifting…)" (Deuchar et al., 2016, p.734). One facilitator described participants as "*scared to go into the ring*" for fear of failure and de-masculinisation (Keddie, 2003), yet still able to emerge from the gym with a new found confidence, feeling fitter, stronger and with an aesthetically masculine physique (Deuchar et al., 2016, p.734). These rewards foster intrinsic motivation and encourage engagement in these activities, a demonstration of personal expressiveness whereby the activities the individual engages in become representative of the self over time (Waterman, 1990). Once comfortable in these masculine ideals, participants could engage with the therapeutic counselling offered through the intervention. Deuchar et al. (2016) describe how boxing metaphors were used to enhance the accessibility of counselling sessions, allowing participants to "experiment with the

performance of broader version of local, hegemonic masculinity and learn to express emotions and vulnerabilities". By enhancing the appeal of what is described as "a feminine space" through use of these metaphors, the intervention promotes greater coherence between this space and participant's perception of them, thus facilitating engagement.

Self-construction.

At the opposing end of the continuum are interventions where the participant is provided more agency, through engagement in certain activities and development of social bonds to re-structure and develop their own possible self. This is consistent with the self-constructivist perspective where identity exploration involves piecing together aspects of one's external world. In essence, these programmes operate from a place of developmental individualisation where participants make use of available resources to revise their identity (Schwartz, 2001).

This is most notable is Mørck's (2014) exploration of the People's College. On entering the programme, participant Bilal remained affiliated with gangs and expressed his ambivalence over taking part; "*I still have one leg in the gang community…I am uncertain if this is the way I want to go*" (p.491). Following Berzonsky's (1990) model of identity processing, an inherently constructivist theory, Bilal has adopted a diffuse/avoidant style to address his dilemmas where he procrastinates due to a "fear of being lonely and isolated" (p.491). However, as he was able to develop his relationship with his mentor, Bilal begins to consider alternatives to his previous gang identity;

> "*I've got a network at the school. I am beginning to believe in myself. Jesper is finding something in me, that I did not know I had…I see him as a role model, as a good friend who can share his experience of how he had felt*" (p.491).

By developing his relationship with his mentor, Bilal was able to consider alternative identities and base his possible self on similar ideals, with intersubjectivity opening his eyes to new perspectives (Needs & Adair-Stantiall, 2018). After making a rational decision to disengage from the gang, his identity style becomes more exploratory (Berzonsky (1990) as he takes an active role in exploring the opportunities available to him at People's College. He subsequently adopts a new and meaningful position within the collective as co-facilitator of a course on gang-criminality. Mørck (2014) goes on to describe how Bilal brings new ideas to the course with great success, demonstrating active participation with the social environment that results in a workable and internally consistent identity.

Despite the differences in these positions, both mechanisms are associated with high levels of self-determination, feelings of happiness and satisfaction and development of a coherent sense of self (Waterman et al., 2002; Schwartz et al., 2000; Berzonsky, 1992). There is no right or wrong approach in the way an individual is likely to develop a positive and synthesised self-identity that will assist their journey to desistance (Schwartz, 2002). It may be a question of individual differences, dependent on how a participant can actively interact with their interpersonal, social and cultural environments but also of the circumstances under which each is likely to be effective. Pawson and Tilley's (1997) 'Context-Mechanism-Outcome' configuration is of relevance here, whereby different contexts may initiate different mechanisms of change, which in turn may produce different outcomes for different individuals.

Immersion into roles.

The third and final mechanism of change refers to the processes associated with role transitions, specifically the enactment of the possible self in roles facilitated by the intervention. This allows for the achievement of identity-related goals (Ashforth, 2001).

At Homeboy Industries, participants were placed in one of many businesses according to their skill set, so they could embody the ideal of "the family man' and secure a stable source of income to provide for their family (Arocha, 2015). Deuchar and Weide (2019, p.855) note "the young men described the wide variety of rehabilitation and education classes they engaged in, employment opportunities they had taken up, and the way in which they were beginning to acquire qualifications and resumes". At Victory Outreach, participants could become the man of god by "taking their faith to the streets and verbally proselytizing to others", thus affirming their engagement with the process of recovery (Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013, p.10). For others the roles were less prescriptive. One participant in Arocha's (2015) study viewed himself as a wounded healer;

> "*We can change because by using my story and what I've learned and been through the pains that I suffered – maybe I could share it with one, two or three of them in a crowd and maybe one, two, three of them will change their mind*" (p.56).

Whilst the capacity for this individual to enact this identity is not made clear in the study, members of Homeboy Industries were encouraged to share their testimonies in group therapy and as part of the 'thought of the day' (Flores, 2016). Through the construction of personal narratives in these settings, participants can make sense of their world and find

purpose whilst striving for a sense of continuity as they transition into new roles (Ashforth, 2001).

Findings from Randhawa-Horne et al. (2019) and Geraghty and Akerman (2017) contribute to these ideas. As prison-based programmes, both Identity Matters and Changing the Game lack the multi-faceted and holistic approach that benefits interventions delivered in the community. Without access to specific roles in which participants can transition into, both programmes facilitate desistance by preparing individuals for later stages in the rehabilitation process. Changing the Game enables participants to undergo an identity shift, although the underlying mechanisms are less explicit. Through the process of self-reflection and exploration, (ex)gang-members undergo a transition by sharing their experiences with the wider therapeutic community, facilitating understanding and allowing reintegration into the group as community members rather than gang-members (Akerman, 2018).

Even without access to specific socially defined roles, all seven interventions provide participants with the opportunity to be part of an alternative, pro-social group. At Homeboy Industries, Arocha (2015, p.65) describes how “it was an ongoing theme at Homeboy Industries to talk about becoming a productive member of society”. Where role identities are understood as socially constructed definitions of self-in-role, being accepted and integrated into these groups allows participants to experiment with an alternative identity than a gang member before deciding whether that role can be further developed and become self-defining through engagement in subsequent activities (Ashforth, 2001). Specifically, where disengagement from the gang leaves an individual susceptible to a number of unmet needs, being able to identify with an alternative social group provides the sense of identity and belonging that was once provided by the gang.

General Discussion

The current review sought to explore the mechanisms of change underpinning tertiary intervention programmes for adult gang members. Following a systematic review of the qualitative literature and meta-ethnographic synthesis, the results suggest that gang intervention programmes operate through a series of interrelated mechanisms that produce a change in identity. First, individuals are encouraged and assisted in generating ideas around a possible self. Secondly, those possible identities are negotiated through the mechanisms of self-discovery and self-constructivism before, finally, gang members are able to enact their identity goals as they transition into legitimate pro-social roles. Often these are not wholly new identities but, instead, connected to the current self and past experiences (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) where protective aspects such as masculinity are retained and re-negotiated. Theoretically this increases self-continuity and self-coherence, reducing the level of dissonance encountered when transitioning into unfamiliar roles and subsequently assisting with the desistance process.

This has practical implications for the development of future gang intervention programmes, offering a framework for the sequencing of interventions as an individual passes through the CJS. For example, Changing the Game and Identity Matters, show that custodial interventions might offer a space for ex-gang members to share their narratives, reflect and understand their own trajectories before generating ideas about who they might become. Then in the community, interventions delivered by probation and third-sector organisations might provide individuals with the resources and support to construct these new identities, before, finally, ex-gang members are able to re-integrative into wider society in a productive and legitimate manner. With this in mind, there is value in considering how

intervention strategies might be established to provide tangible roles that gang members are able to transition into in the latter stages of their rehabilitation journey.

Strengths and Limitations of the Current Review

It is important to consider the strengths and limitations of the review as part of a critical appraisal of the process and consideration of the quality of evidence upon which the findings have been drawn.

The systematic nature of the search was a strength. Publication bias was minimised through a systematic search of six databases, contacting experts in the field and the inclusion of unpublished doctoral theses and validity of the review was improved by introducing a second researcher during the quality appraisal stage. However, only one researcher undertook data extraction raising potential risks of bias in selecting data relevant to the review question. Similarly, due to time constraints, one researcher synthesised the data. Although the identification of second and third order constructs were fully discussed in supervision, having additional members of the review team might have resulted in different interpretations of the constructs and subsequently generated different results.

A limitation of the review relates to the methodology of the included studies and how this misaligns with the review questions. The study of mechanisms of change in therapy is an inherently psychological process yet, with nine of the included studies grounded in criminological methodology, little information about the processes of change for individuals participating in these programmes is available. Where interviews with participants did form part of data collection, less value was placed on these quotes in the final write up. This posed difficulties for the identification of second order constructs meaning that identification of

mechanisms remains theoretical. To develop a better understanding of a particularly underdeveloped area, the topic would benefit from further research focused on the experience of gang members engaging in these interventions, allowing for greater interpretation of their identity status at different stages. Further research would also facilitate testing and development of the proposed framework, be necessary to ensure the development of subsequent interventions were evidence-based.

A further limitation is the generalisability of the results and lack of variability amongst participants within the studies. In three of the studies the sample consisted of Chicano Gang Members, which may mean that the emphasis on masculinity is skewed by the cultural focus of those studies where the sample comprised just Chicano Gang Members (Arocha, 2015; Flores, 2016; Flores & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013) and findings are positioned within this literature base. In three of the studies participants are described as originating from ethnic minority backgrounds although no further detail is provided and the individuality of participants is not wholly considered. Where the focus is on expression of masculinity and given the subjectivity of identity in general, this is likely to be subject to interpretation across different cultures and contexts. Further research aimed at understanding the importance of cultural identity in the process of desistance for gang members would be beneficial.

CHAPTER TWO

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Ex-Gang Members as they Transition Into and Out of Gangs.

On 31st December 2017, four men were fatally stabbed in unrelated incidents across London. This brought the number of fatal stabbings in the capital in 2017 to 80, and marked the start of another year where the media reported serious violence in the UK had reached unprecedented levels. Headlines such as '*Liverpool stabbing: boy 16 killed as Britain's Blood Bath escalates* (Kindred, 2018*)* and '*London now more dangerous than New York City'* (Evans, 2017) highlight how the 'gang' became the focus of blame for street violence across many cities. Whilst arguable that the public and media response to gangs is disproportionate to the problem they pose (Hallworth, 2013; Parkinson, 2005), the reality of gangs and the impact of their offending cannot be ignored.

Despite sensationalist headlines, gangs are not a new phenomenon. Attempts to understand the complexity of these social groups has spanned decades, attracting the attention of researchers from a variety of disciplines`. With an aspiration of mitigating the significant economic and societal cost of gang related activity (HM Government, 2011; Hagedorn, 2005), much of the literature base is directed at trying to define, explain and predict the trajectories of gangs and gang-members to inform policy and practice and reduce the prevalence of gang related crime (Wegerhoff et al., 2019). Within the literature are propositions addressing different typologies of gang membership (Curry et al., 2002; James, 2015; Klein & Maxson, 2006), consideration of risk factors (Hautala et al., 2016; Pedersen, 2014; Raby & Jones, 2016), explanatory theories of gang-related processes (Gibson et al.,

2012; Goldman et al., 2014; Goldman & Hogg, 2016; Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012; Wood & Alleyne, 2010) and exploration of disengagement and desistance (Sweeten et al., 2013; Tonks & Stephenson, 2019).

As this research is quantitative in nature, little is known about the subjective nature of gang trajectories and how individual gang members experience their time within and outside the gang. The potential for qualitative research to further advance knowledge in this area has been overlooked and the voices of gang members have become lost. For example, childhood maltreatment is associated with increased risk of gang involvement in later life (Cepeda et al., 2016; Kubik et al., 2019; Ross & Arsenault, 2018), but only qualitative research can inform how gang members romanticise and normalise their experiences to neutralise the effects of negative labelling, strain and disruption placed upon them by others (Maitra, 2020; Quinn et al., 2017). Where media accounts often bear little resemblance to the reality faced by gangs and continue to reinforce stereotypical depictions of gang members (Esbensen & Tusinski, 2007), qualitative studies like those by Maitra (2020) and Quinn et al. (2017) demonstrate how the narratives of offenders can be a powerful tool to challenge existing views of gang membership and generate greater compassion and understanding within those who work with these populations, as well as the general public (Stefanakis, 2008).

The Importance of Narrative

At the heart of individuality lies one's personal narrative, something unique to all individuals in which stories of the past become entwined with expectations and hopes for the future, culminating in a template to guide subsequent action and shape experience and life (Bruner, 1990; Becker, 1997; DeGrazia, 2005). McAdams (2011) defines this internalised and evolving story of the self as one's narrative identity, a vehicle through which an

individual can construct a defining story of the self that incorporates different aspects of their experience. The idea that the self is multi-faceted dates back to the 1890s with the work of William James. He believed the self could be conceptualised according to two dimensions; the *I* and the *Me.* The *I* equates to the self as knower and is characterised by a sense of continuity and sameness through time, a feeling of distinctiveness compared to others and a sense of personal volition through which the individual can process their experience. In contrast, the *Me* reflects the self as known and comprises all external elements seen as belonging to the individual e.g. my mother, my clothes and my house. The *Me* emphasises how the self is ultimately a social phenomenon, reflecting the embodiment of different roles and positions held as the person become an extension of the environment (Swann & Bosson, 2010). The *I* organises these different aspects of the *Me* into a unified stream of consciousness, or narrative, specific to the individual, allowing for the construction of a core self that offers purpose, unity and coherence in the way the self is understood and presented to others (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams & McLean, 2013).

In recent decades, the roles of personal narratives and identity have demonstrated particular utility when applied to the rehabilitation and desistance of offenders. In his seminal work, Maruna (2001) proposed that a coherent pro-social identity was a requirement of effective rehabilitation, something that could only be achieved through construction of a narrative that allowed the individual to make sense of prior adverse life experiences, bridging the gap between offending behaviour and a new pro-social way of living. In a similar vein, Giordano et al. (2002) identified that this identity shift occurred when an opportunity or 'hook for change' occurred in conjunction with a 'cognitive shift', reflecting an openness and desire for change. This enabled visualisation of a possible self, forming a template for future behaviour until the old self was no longer viable with a new pro-social identity. The

relevance of this was later given more practical application when extended to treatment approaches, most notably the Good Lives Model where the construction of an adaptive identity is achieved through the acquisition of capabilities and resources and an understanding of one's core values and personal goals (Ward & Marshall, 2007).

Maruna (1998) also argues that we are only fully able to understand offending behaviour by analysing socially constructed individual narratives and connecting those narratives to the roles held within a particular social context. Positioning the narrative as a key instigator of action, Canter and Youngs (2012) argued that offending behaviour should be perceived as the enactment of a narrative shaped by earlier experiences rather than a later interpretation of the context in which the offence occurred, so offering insight into an individual's subjective understanding of the factors that motivated behaviour and an underlying coherence regarding specific patterns of crime. Canter et al. (2003) found evidence to support the presence of narrative roles that allowed offenders to make sense of their crimes, later developed into a theoretical framework that drew together emotional, cognitive and identity components that were delineated into four generalised themes; Professional, Revenger, Victim and Hero (Youngs & Canter, 2012). This framework has since been applied to a variety of different offence typologies and offending groups including contract killers, rioters, personality disordered offenders, young offenders and women (Ciesla et al., 2019; Goodlad et al., 2019; Ioannou et al., 2015; Willmott & Ioannou, 2017; Yaneva et al., 2018).

Identity and Gang Membership

According to Cohen (1990, p.12.), "That membership in gangs confers identity…could be the single most common proposition encountered in the literature on

gangs." This suggests Cohen was probably attuned to the ideas of early gang scholars who developed ideas about gang membership connected to identity (Bloch & Niederhoffer, 1958; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Thrasher, 1967). However, its use as a primary theoretical construct is notably underused (Alleyne & Wood, 2012; Lauger, 2020). Only in the last decade have these ideas undergone further development, demonstrating the importance of identity in understanding gangs and related behaviour (Goldman et al., 2014; Hennigan & Spanovic, 2012; Leverso & Matsueda, 2019; Stretesky & Pogrebin, 2007).

James' ideas of the self are echoed in theories relating to the definition of one's personal identity, specifically social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and identity theory (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980). Both theories view the self as a socially defined construct where identification is derived from the individual's membership of a social category and their role within it (Oyserman et al., 2012). Both hold particular relevance for gangs, offering insight into the construction of individual gang identities (Lauger, 2020). For identity theorists, role identities represent distinct aspects of the self-concept and encapsulate the internalised meanings and expectations associated with a particular role. In contrast, social identity theorists argue that people are able to adopt a different identity according to a particular social interaction where aspects of their self-concept come to represent the norms and values of the group. Thus, if an individual derives a sense of social identity from belonging to a gang, the acquisition of a role identity can be explained by an individual's interpretation of that role, and the roles held by other gang members. Whilst social identities and role identities are not mutually exclusive, understanding how someone comes to position themselves in a particular role in the gang allows the distinctiveness of the individual to emerge. Where a particular role identity holds certain expectations and norms that guide behaviour and action, the individual will bring

aspects of their own personal identity to the role, meaning that individuals within the gang may experience the same role in different ways. Furthermore, 'gang member' is just one role among many that an individual will simultaneously hold, all of which will be integrated into a coherent framework through construction of a narrative that enables one to make sense of their experience as a whole (McAdams, 2011).

Despite the importance of identity in understanding criminal activity (Dean, 2012), we know little about identity related processes and how they relate to gang members. Only a small number of studies have applied social identity theory or identity theory to street gangs (Alleyne & Wood, 2012, Goldman et al., 2014). Hennigan and Spanovic (2012) found that group cohesion was directly related to the strength of identification as a gang member, and that criminal behaviour, specifically violence, was mediated by identity salience. Similarly, Stretesky and Pogrebin (2007) found that incarcerated gang members, with stronger gang identities, were willing to use violence as a means of displaying loyalty to the group and promoted the gang as being willing and able to engage in excessive violence if threatened. The strength of identification with the gang is also associated with enduring gang membership (Leverso & Matsueda, 2019) but varying levels of commitment are indicative of different behavioural patterns (Bubolz & Lee, 2019). Whilst these studies generate support for the importance of identity in perpetuating gang behaviour, the qualitative nature of them highlights variations between how participants experience their identity as a gang member. This remains an unexplored area within gang literature and merits greater consideration of the individual processes that operate as an individual comes to identify with a gang.

A Framework for Transition

According to Ashforth (2001), *identification* speaks to the process by which an individual comes to define themselves, either wholly or partly, in terms of a particular role identity as they transition between sequentially held roles. For identification to occur within a particular role and allow the person to be situated in a particular context (Needs & Adair-Stantiall, 2018), successful reconciliation of four psychological motives is required.

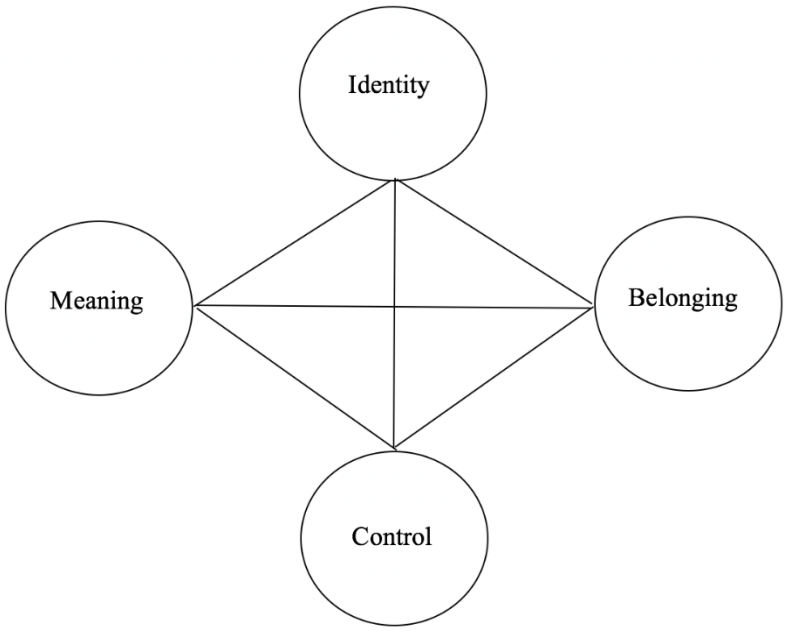


Figure Three. *Psychological motives cued by role transitions (Ashforth, 2001).*

As indicated in figure three, the motives for identity, meaning, control and belonging are interconnected and reciprocal; identity facilitates meaning, meaning facilitates control, control facilitates belonging and belonging validates identity (Ashforth, 2001). As an individual adjusts to a role and these four motives are met, role identification is more likely to occur, and that particular identity will hold greater subjective importance. Where an individual is able to reconcile these motives as they transition between roles and contexts,

narratives will emerge and become integrated into the self-concept to provide meaning and consistency to events over time.

Narrative Study of Gangs

In addition to movement between more conventional roles, gang members will experience at least two further distinctive transitions, entering and then later moving away from the gang and associated lifestyle. In recent years, gang scholars have recognised the value of narratives when exploring disengagement and desistance from gangs, gradually moving beyond the simplistic push (e.g. violence and disillusionment) and pull (e.g. becoming a parent, relationships and employment) factors that motivate de-identification (Densley & Pyrooz, 2019; Roman et al., 2017) and instead considering the processes and outcomes associated with the cessation of this lifestyle.

Consistent with the earlier work of Maruna (2001) and Giordano et al. (2002), research in this area builds upon Paternoster and Bushway's (2009) identity-based theory of desistance which positions the individual as an agent of change within the desistance process, arguing that a shift towards a pro-social identity occurs once an individual becomes dissatisfied with aspects of their life and begins to imagine a new, possible self. Berger et al. (2017) offer a five-stage framework for the process of desistance - a *triggering* event where the worldview of the individual is challenged by a particular event, a period of *contemplation* where the meaning of gang membership is questioned, *exploration* of alternative lifestyles and identiies, *exit* from the gang and finally *maintenance* of a new pro-social identity.

Within their qualitative study Berger et al. (2017) recognise the variation between desistance pathways, not only identifying distinct motives for desitance but also

acknolwedging that each stage of the process has different manifestations for each participant. Decker et al. (2014) acknowledge that relinquishing a strongly held gang-related identity is a complex process, impeded by a combination of personal doubts and the influence of social groups and context. Sweeten et al. (2013), however, conceptualise transitioning out of gangs as a process of de-embedding. Where gang embeddedness refers to the "individual immersion in an enduring social network" (Pyrooz et al., 2012) and indicates a degree of variation in individual membership, Sweeten et al., (2013) conclude that there are multiple pathways through which gang members can desist. These include a conscious intent to leave the gang or incrementally decreasing gang embeddedness, although it is worth noting that their findings focus on subsequent effects of desistance (e.g. reduction in offending, association with anti-social peers and obtaining employment) rather than the processes involved.

Broadly speaking, these findings offer support for Thornberry et al.'s (2003) notion that not all gang members are created equal and allude to a unique transformational pattern which emerges as individuals derive meaning from the different experiences and issues presenting in their lives. Whilst identity-based theories of desistance are empirically supported (Rocque et al., 2016), they lack depth from a psychological perspective by failing to consider how an individual reconciles the dissonance arising when there is a discrepancy between their past and future selves (Vaughan, 2007). Echoing the *redemption script* proposed by Maruna (2001), Vaughan (2007) argues that the re-construction of an internal narrative allows individuals to reconceptualise the self by reinterpreting past events to suit future aspirations. Whilst there are currently no studies that consider gang membership through this lens, the process is demonstrated by King (2013) who found adult males subject to probation supervision could reflect on past offending and construct their narrative to

present their future self in a more positive tone. Similarly, in her sample of substance-using pregnant women, Stone (2016) found that many were able to reinterpret the traumatic past events as necessary for personal growth and development, specifically their heightened strength and wisdom in the present. However, use of thematic analysis in these studies focused solely on patterns and commonalities within the samples and overlooked any potential divergence; the latter is an important concept when seeking to fully understand the dynamics of identity change.

The Present Study

Exploring the reflexivity of gang members through their internal narratives as they transition towards change exposes how presenting concerns are negotiated and reconciled before integrating these into a definition of a future self (Vaughan, 2007). This can be achieved by considering the psychological processes evoked when transitioning between roles. As Needs and Adair-Stantiall (2018) highlight, conceptualising transitions according to Ashforth's (2001) framework can cast new light on facets like identity and narratives. In addition to movement between more conventional roles, gang members will experience at least two further distinctive transitions; entering and then later moving away from the gang and associated lifestyle. However, the literature omits any understanding of how identity narratives are constructed and experienced by gang members. Matters of joining and leaving gangs tend to be compartmentalised within the research base and the lack of longitudinal research means that consideration of an individual's trajectory through the gang has had little attention. Understanding the narratives of gang members in their entirety not only instils hope that they might be understood as individuals with multi-faceted life histories and uniquely personal needs, it also facilitates a connection to the true meaning behind actions and decisions (Stevens, 2012).

With this in mind, the present study seeks to understand how ex-gang members are able to make sense of their experience as they transition in and out of the gang, and the subsequent meaning they attribute to their experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Using qualitative methodology to understand how narrative identities are constructed within this population through reconciliation of issues relating to identity, meaning, control and belonging, the research lends a novel contribution to a growing knowledge base on gangs, but also offers individual insights into the process of change. Adoption of a phenomenological stance allows for the collection of rich, detailed accounts from participants, facilitates greater insight into their world and unearths the perspectives and meanings unique to the person's embodied and situated relationship to the world (Smith et al., 2009). As there are currently no studies within the gang literature utilising interpretative phenomenological analysis, the research also builds on existing narrative studies of gang members by fully acknowledging the heterogeneity of gang members and examining the similarities and divergence between participants.

Method

Design

The study seeks to understand how ex-gang members make sense of their experience as they transition in and out of the gang, and the subsequent meaning they attribute to their experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). It adopts a phenomenological stance, allowing for the collection of rich, detailed accounts to facilitate greater insight into the participant's world, unearthing the perspectives and meanings which are unique to the person's embodied and situated relationship to the world (Smith et al., 2009). The analysis focuses on

understanding the experience of individual gang members within the sample using semi-structured interviews and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

IPA is a qualitative approach concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience. Drawing on a theoretical framework of phenomenology, IPA allows the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning that participants derive from their experience whilst also pursuing an idiographic commitment, situating the participant within a particular content (Gill, 2015: Smith et al., 2009). Given its epistemological assumptions, IPA is well suited for the examination of identity construction (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Additionally, where there are no existing studies using IPA with gang members, the research offers insight into the experience of this hidden and often marginalised population providing both a valuable and unique contribution to the existing literature base (Pawlez, 2017).

Sample and Recruitment

To ensure theoretical consistency, a purposive sampling strategy was used to allow for the selection of cases based on the qualities they possess and the value that they offer to the research (Tongco, 2007). Where the wider thesis aims to advance understanding of transitions of adult gang members, individuals were selected on the basis that they were over the age of twenty-one, had lived experience as a gang member beyond adolescence and had since disengaged from gang life.

Gang-members represent a hard to reach population (Eidson et al., 2017). Where use of a designated gatekeeper with 'insider knowledge' was unsuccessful, internet research was used as a means to identify those who had gone on to set up their own businesses supporting

young people at risk or affected by gang affiliation. Following ethical approval, the author contacted each individual, provided a summary of the project and enquired as to their willingness and capacity to take part. Of 29 individuals contacted, seven were willing to engage in an informal discussion about the project allowing the author to assess their suitability according to the outlined sample inclusion criteria. This provided an opportunity to establish trust and rapport with potential participants through use of self-disclosure. The researcher shared information about her experience working with gang-members, along with the rationale for the research. In doing so, she sought to allay any misconceptions that she was positioning herself as an expert, and also reassured participants through the provision of authentic human-contact (Henretty & Levitt, 2010). All seven individuals met the sample inclusion criteria, and five participants subsequently agreed to take part in semi-structured interviews. In line with guidance by Smith et al. (2009), a sample of five was deemed sufficient for the development of meaningful points of connection and comparison between each case. With permission, demographic characteristics were obtained prior to interview and are presented in table three.

Table 3

Demographic characteristics of participants.

Participant Identifier	Age (years)	Ethnicity	Length of secondary desistance
Lennox	56	Black Caribbean	15 years
Matthew	37	Black British	9 years
Sephton	30	Black British	6 years
Cody	36	White British	3 years
Luke	27	Black British	6 years

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate method of data collection, using a consistent framework of questions to ensure continuity and obtain detailed insights into the experiences and perceptions of participants (Dawson, 2009). A copy of the interview schedule was provided before data collection to prepare participants for the interview and alleviate any anxieties from the prospect of talking about their lived experience. The interview schedule was devised considering the existing literature and the research question, and consisted of descriptive, narrative, structural and evaluative questions, thus encouraging participants to talk at length (Smith et al., 2009).[6]

One interview was conducted face-to-face in an office space at the participant's workplace. One was conducted by video call, and the remaining three were conducted over the telephone. Whilst face-to-face contact is considered the "gold standard" for qualitative interviews (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006, p.389), difficulties in arranging a convenient time and place, along with later Covid-19 related restrictions, prevented any direct contact between researcher and participants whilst data collection was on-going. The use of telephone interviews to gather qualitative data has drawn criticism for impeding the development of rapport (Sweet, 2002), restricting the use of probing (Carr & Worth, 2001) and losing contextual information (Aquilino, 1994). However, in a systematic review of the literature using telephone interviews, Novick (2008) concluded that these concerns were unfounded and the researcher found this means of engagement productive. Thus, data gathered using telephone and video call facilities were given equal weight to the data obtained during the face-to-face interview.

[6] See appendix C

The duration of interviews ranged from 49 to 138 minutes (M= 92 minutes). The total sum of audio data was 461 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and stored in a password protected folder to which only the researcher had access.

Table 4

Ethical Considerations

Approval	The study adhered to the ethical guidelines stipulated by the UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice, a code which has been adopted by the University of Portsmouth. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Portsmouth Science and Health Faculty Ethics Committee (SFEC 2018 – 132B; see appendix D). Two further applications for ethical review were made during the course of the research; one to address the use of gatekeepers to assist with participant recruitment and one to address issues of anonymity. Ethical guidelines for research of the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2014) and the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics of the Health and Care Professions Council, 2016) were adhered to throughout the study.
Consent	Consent to take part in the study was fully informed. An information sheet (appendix E) was provided to participants before agreeing to participate in the research. Participants were invited to ask any questions of the researcher and once satisfied, the consent form (appendix F) was signed by the participant and researcher.
Right to withdraw	All participants were given the right to withdraw from the research. This was outlined in the participant information sheet for the semi-structured interviews, and participants were invited to contact the researcher within a grace period of one week if they no longer wanted to take part. No participant withdrew from the study.
Confidentiality	Participants were informed of the limits of confidentiality regarding the researcher's duty to share any information that suggests a risk of harm to themselves or someone else, or information that relates to any previously undisclosed crime.
Anonymity	The collection of personal information about participants was minimal to avoid identification. One participant requested to waive his right to anonymity as a condition of taking part and was subsequently asked to sign a disclaimer to confirm his request. (appendix G). To promote equal opportunities for all participants, the option of

	waiving anonymity was extended to the remaining four participants. Only one wished to remain anonymous and is the only participant assigned a pseudonym and all other personal identifiers including gang names, associates or specific locations were anonymised during the transcription process
Data management	Once interviews had been conducted, all data was electronically transcribed and stored on a password protected file on the researcher's PC. Files were also securely encrypted and backed up on an external hard drive. Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to the information.
Risks to participants	The risk posed to all participants was deemed low. It was anticipated that recalling their experience within the gang may evoke painful or traumatic memories for some, leading to feelings of distress. Participants were advised not to proceed if they felt such feelings may be overwhelming, however were offered an informal debrief at the close of each interview. None reported experiencing any psychological distress after taking part in the interview.

Analytic Procedure

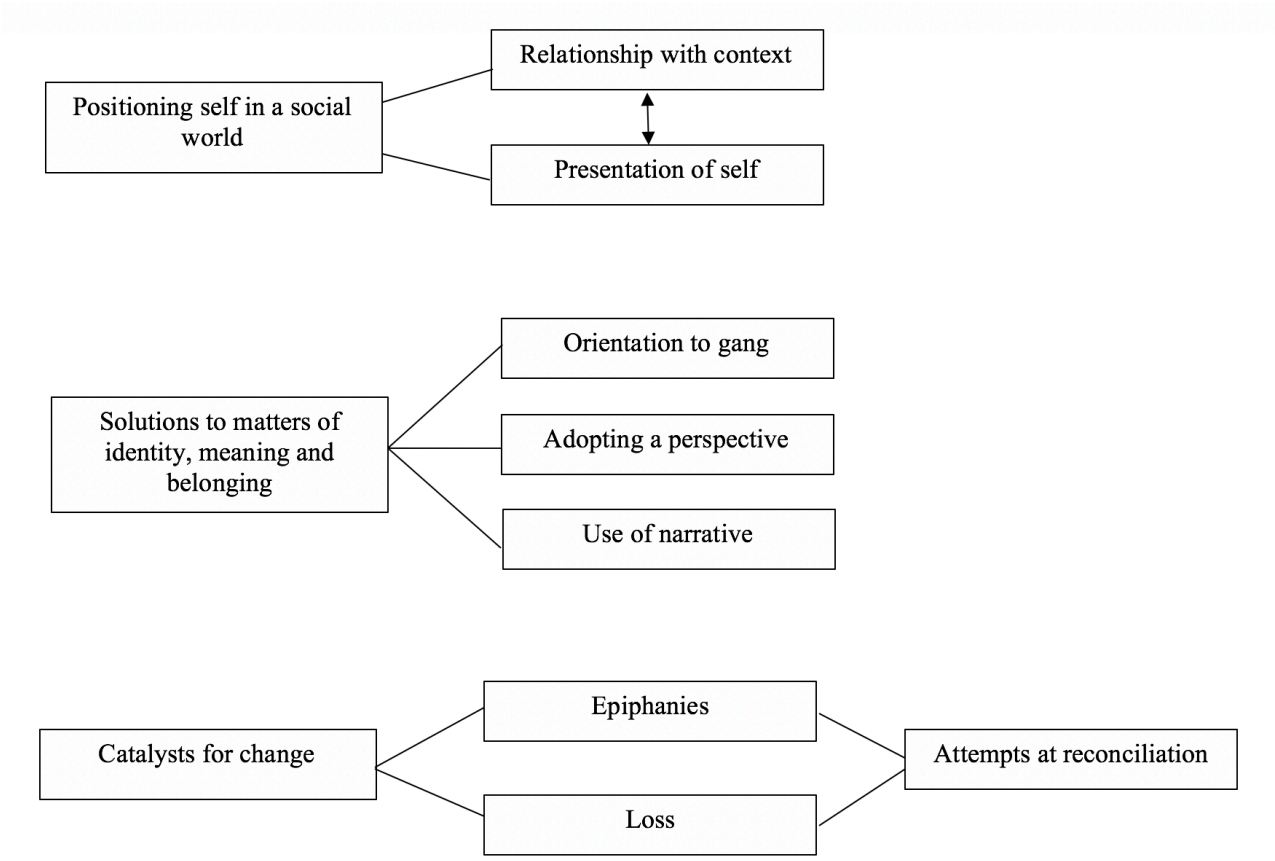
The analysis involved four stages. Initially, the researcher became fully immersed in the data by listening to the interview recordings whilst reading and re-reading the transcripts. She then further developed the data set by noting down connections, associations and preliminary interpretations. The second and third stages involved the identification of emergent themes from the original data set and additional notes before making connections between themes in each transcript. During the fourth stage, the researcher identified patterns of themes across the five cases and conceptualised these into super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. IPA is underpinned by hermeneutics, known as the theory of interpretation. As such the researcher stayed true to the hermeneutic circle and continually moved between interpretation and original text throughout the analytic procedure. The hermeneutic circle represents an iterative process of analysis and refers to the idea that one's understanding of the text as a whole is established by reference to individual parts, and where each individual part must be understood by reference to the whole (Smith et al., 2009).

Results and Discussion

Three super-ordinate themes emerged which allowed further exploration of the experience of gang members as they transition into, and later out of gangs; "Positioning self in a social world", "Solutions to identity, meaning and belonging" and "Catalysts for change".

Figure Four.

Conceptualisation of super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes.



Positioning Self in a Social World

Human beings are social creatures, coexisting and operating within a world of others where we must find ways to engage and achieve a degree of acceptance (Needs & Adair-Stantiall, 2018). This theme refers to the processes though which participants become situated in their social contexts, illustrating how they navigated a world with other people and positioned themselves within it. These processes can be conceptualised by two interrelated sub-ordinate themes; relationship with context and presentation of self.

Relationship with context.

'The context principle' refers to the concept that all behaviour, thoughts feelings and emotions occur as a result of continued reciprocal interaction with one's external environment and those positioned within it (Mesquita et al., 2010). As such, the role of context is inescapable and represents an important piece of the puzzle for understanding human behaviour where environmental cues provide information about the suitability of possible roles and variations in behaviour (Cassidy, 2012). This holds particular relevance for two participants who held different versions of the self, elicited in different contexts.

> *"It just allowed me to be a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde character really.*" (Lennox).

> *"It's Jekyll and Hyde, you've got to become two people. I knew how to manage it, 'cause I've had a son from 15, so I knew how to switch it off."* (Matthew).

Referring to themselves as 'Jekyll and Hyde', Matthew and Lennox convey a self-disunity which they conceptualise according to two sides of the self; one representing good and one representing bad. Both associate their 'good side' as representative of their personal identity, associated with conventional roles of husband, father and friend, whilst the bad side embodies their identity as a gang member. Their ability to switch between these different role identities is a manifestation of Ashforth's (2001) role transitions and fragmentation of the self represents adaptions to different contexts.

> *"…and it's hard, because you're – I'm Matthew first, before I was Skelly, but on the streets I was Skelly. So, when I stepped in my door to my wife and kids, I'm Matthew."* (Matthew).

> *"I only looked at myself as a gang member, when I needed to be….when I wasn't with my gang friends, I tried to be pretty normal."* (Lennox).

Both recognised that fitting in to a particular context required a specific set of beliefs, norms and interactional styles and were able to construct social boundaries around these roles, allowing them to concentrate on whatever domain is currently salient (Ashforth, 2001). However, as Matthew articulated, these boundaries might break down in the event of an unexpected collision of context:

> *"I chased him to his house, he acted like he'd got a gun, so, I dropped my bag and pulled out my gun, he ran outside. His mum come out screaming, I put it away, apologised to her, like proper pulled my bally up, said, "Listen, this is who I am, I have problems with your son. I'm so sorry to pull a gun outside your house. I did not know you was in. I would never do that." You know, she went, "You know what, you can tell that you've got manners, because who would ever apologise?" I went, "No, I would never do that if I knew you was there." Shook hands with her son, I left it at that." (*Matthew).

In this moment, Matthew illustrates how he can instantaneously switch between identities. Whilst his gang member identity is important to him ("*Yeah, when I was in it and I was defined as a gang member it meant a lot"*), it does not become a dominant ideology overwhelming his existence. Instead it becomes a position, or role, adopted to meet a particular agenda which in the moment above is to intimidate others. His ability to move between positions to meet a different agenda and calmly manage an emotive situation,

demonstrates a degree of agency and intersubjectivity, where he is able to reflect on the perspective of the mother and changes his behaviour accordingly (Gillespie, 2012).

A variation on this theme relates to the way in which different contexts can offer hooks for change and facilitate new perspectives (Giordano et al., 2013). Luke's ability to initiate change is impeded where he feels stuck in a particular context, the environment he associates with his gang lifestyle. He can only make this transition when he attends a rehabilitation programme in a different country, affording him the opportunity to construct a new identity that later becomes integrated into his core self.

> *"I needed a change. I just – I needed a change. I needed to move completely out of the area."* (Luke).

> *"So, when I went to the programme – it was like a rehab programme… It's supposed to last from nine to 12 months. You have to live in it. You can't leave when you want, you can't smoke, you can't drink, you can't do anything, you can't get in a relationship…. So, I stayed there 14 months, and I changed. I really did change*." (Luke).

Where parts of ourselves remain rooted in different contexts, Luke soon becomes drawn back into the context in which he was previously immersed.

> *"I felt the urge to go to the streets and go back to where I come from, and it wasn't to join a gang, it was to let them know there's a way out…"* (Luke).

> *"I've done that for a while, but obviously, I wasn't making enough money, so I just went back to crime…. I just – I didn't know. I knew I was messing up. I knew I shouldn't have been doing what I was doing. But I just – but I felt like there was no other way, there was nothing else for me. I never had it. That's one that I – there was nothing else to do apart from – yeah."* (Luke).

Similarly, to Matthew, Luke is initially able to move between positions as he attempts to project his own personal change into the context that he was once part of. Where he strives to meet the specific agenda of this position (to help others), it transpires that this particular role is socially incongruent to this particular context and places him at a material disadvantage. As a consequence, Luke is required to revert back to familiar behavioural patterns to adapt to his evolving situation yet maintains some agency as he amends his own personal perspectives towards violence.

> *"No violence. There was actually no violence, yeah. No violence, no stabbing, no hitting no-one, no shooting, nothing. It was just committing crime."* (Luke).

Presentation of self.

Schlenker (2011) emphasised the importance of self-presentation as a fundamental means of surviving in a social world. Consistent with the psychological motive for identity, people hold a desire to establish a version of themselves to present to others (Ashforth, 2001). The particular form this takes is based on previous experience of social interactions and is also dependent on the situation and context of the individual.

Whilst all five participants grew up in a world fraught with hostility, Lennox experienced a precarious childhood. His narrative details prolonged exposure to victimisation and stigmatisation by family and community, articulating a sense of the difficulties he experienced by living in a world where no one was prepared to trust him.

> *"If you walk into a shop, it's all eyes on me, they're not interested in watching anyone else, they just watch this Black kid that's come in or this Black guy that's come in and, you know, you're not trusted. The community I lived in, at one stage, they called me Stealer, so every time they saw me, they used to say, "Oh, there's Stealer," you know, 'cause I got caught stealing at school."* (Lennox)

> *"And it wasn't just the community 'cause when I go home, my mum gave me labels as well and my sisters, so, yeah…My mum always saw me as this naughty boy*." (Lennox)

> *"…people just hated you because of the colour of your skin."* (Lennox).

Consistent with issues of dominance presented in Herman's (2001) dialogical self-theory, the labels placed on him by those in positions of greater power (e.g. his parents and the white community) become integrated into his own self-view. Matters of 'you are' have been transformed to 'I am' in his narrative and have ultimately become self-fulfilling.

> *"You tend to become like the labels people put on you if you believe them, and I think I was impressionable, and I believed that – I believed it sometimes"* (Lennox).

His existence is permeated by loneliness and isolation, devoid of any meaningful connections, leaving his fundamental need to seek acceptance from others chronically undermined (Blackhart et al., 2006).

> *"I was isolated and I couldn't – and it was difficult to make friends, form relationships with members of the opposite sex."* (Lennox).

> *"If I went home and said certain people were giving me grief, they'd think it was my fault, and so, it was very hard. I didn't have that kind of relationship with my family."* (Lennox).

To manage the uncertainty and dissonance this invokes, Lennox makes increased efforts to obtain acceptance but does so in a way that contradicts Blackhart et al.'s (2006) theoretical proposal that social rejection increases pro-social behaviour. Lennox has to compromise his own values and sense of self in order to engage with others and adopts anti-social moral values to justify his actions. This process allows him to be part of something and establish his own place in a relatively hostile world.

> *"In order to make friends with people that were racist and horrible, I had to steal for them."* (Lennox)

> *"I saw myself as I was in the right, they were in the wrong. I saw myself, at times, like a Robin Hood, a kind of – I thought I was a good criminal."* (Lennox)

Over time, this public version of himself becomes cyclically reinforced as he strives to impress and prove himself to others, despite the internal dissonance this invokes. At times he appears caught in a paradox, conscious he is being used. This is something Luke also experiences, yet both participants continue to embrace these anti-social values and behaviour patterns that are valued by the gang through the perpetration of disproportionate violence. This represents a negative variation of the processes proposed by Blackhart et al., (2006), allowing Lennox to present a version of himself he believes is more attractive to the gang, so that his sense of belonging and connectedness is maintained.

> *"Yeah, 'cause I was loyal, but a lot of them used me because they knew how I was, I would never run away from anything. They knew that I would always have their back, so even if they deceived me a lot, 'cause they knew that. Yeah, I just got used a lot."* (Luke).

> *"There was a couple of the guys who wouldn't comply, who wouldn't acknowledge that or sell for them, so they wanted me to have words with them and change their mind. And I thought, well, you want to send me to these two Black guys and their only crime is, they won't sell for you, and I thought, well, big deal. So, I didn't really want to do it, so I – now, they couldn't force me to do it, since they headhunted me because of my violence and they weren't in a position to fight me. Eventually what they did was tell me that these two guys had been giving crack cocaine and heroin to little children…"* (Lennox)

> *"I went in there and I took out my knife, and I didn't stab him like I would stab other people. I used to say I'd turn him into a teabag and perforated. I'd put lots of holes in non-life-threatening parts of his body."* (Lennox).

However, if others perceived him negatively, it would be a repetition of his earlier experience of social rejection. To manage this, the role that Lennox embodies within this particular context becomes a performance, allowing him to separate aspects of the self that are incongruent with his own moral values and demonstrates a proactive attempt to influence the way others perceive him.

> *"I felt that when I needed to perform, I needed to find this person that was going to commit that crime, and so I would have to take a few hours and try and do some jogging, exercise, focus my mind. I have to imagine that, right, I need to get this money, these people have got it and I can't – I've got to be prepared to do whatever it is to get it.*" (Lennox)

> *"You're living a false life, you know, people saw you as smartly dressed, you often had wads of cash, and the life you were living, it's not real…But you just walked around as if you were successful or were someone, but you weren't."* (Lennox).

A variation of this theme is seen in the way aspects of the self can develop as an adaptive strategy to a particular context. Sephton, for example, was driven by a need to survive in a world fraught with hostility.

> *"It's like if you're in the mix of lions, then you're going to have to turn into a lion to survive and I think that's what it was. I was thrown into the deep end and I had to learn how to swim very quickly. It was a thing of "Kill or be killed."* (Sephton).

With heightened awareness of his context he realises the necessity of changing his beliefs and behaviours to survive, representing a capacity for 'hidden resilience' (Ungar, 2004). Where research in this area typically finds that peer group bonds strengthen resilience (Malindi & Theron, 2010), Sephton distances himself from others despite defining himself as a gang member.

> *"I chose my road and that was it, so, it was me against them and that's it. Like, that wasn't really – it didn't dominate my mind. It just became who I am."* (Sephton).

> *"It just was natural that, okay, they're against me, I'm against them…It was like they are them and I am me... I know one person that's harder than the whole gang…I was just fighting gangs on my own, and that's pretty much what I was known for.*" (Sephton).

His survival strategy manifests as an air of superiority. He positions himself above those who cannot be trusted as a means of protecting himself, ultimately, influencing how he presents himself to others.

> *"My life brought me into it, in the sense of my experience and being a leader. I felt like, you know what? I've got a lot to give back and I know that I can, 'cause a lot of people followed me. Even when I was on the roads, everyone followed me, or they respected me, feared me, whatever. I had a following of people that I could control."* (Sephton).

Solutions to Matters of Identity, Meaning and Belonging

"I didn't know who I wanted to be…' (Luke).

"Inside of me I was battling with something that I couldn't grasp, I couldn't understand it, but I'm fighting and I don't know why I feel so oppressed, or suppressed, but I don't know why. And I'm like, what is this? I'm getting angry, I'm upset all the time. There's so much mental health that's going on with me, but I don't – I'm too young to understand, yeah?" (Sephton).

As these quotes demonstrate, feelings of uncertainty about one's identity, the world and how to behave within it can be particularly unsettling and even aversive (Jonas et al., 2014). Yet, for all five participants, gangs provide a solution to feelings of uncertainty by reconciling needs relating to identity, meaning and belonging. The way participants address these motives varies according to the particular experience and context of the person in question and is best reflected through two sub-ordinate themes; orientation to the gang and use of narrative.

Orientation to gang.

According to Wagoner and Hogg (2017), the uncertainty someone feels about their place in society can be reduced by psychologically identifying with and becoming attached to a group. For several participants their early experience of hostility, isolation and victimisation means they lack the internal resources to manage subsequent feelings of uncertainty, whilst orientating themselves within a gang fulfils a need for belonging through connectedness with others and acquiring a validated social identity. This process is evident for Matthew and Lennox but manifests in different ways.

Matthew's childhood is fraught with comparisons between the self and others, culminating in feelings of insecurity, resolved through the connection he makes with his brother.

> *"It's not about who give you life, it's who does what for you and who's there for you, who makes you feel like a human and that's my brother did that."* (Matthew)

Due to valence placed on this relationship, Matthew orients himself to the gang relationship. There is a sense that he surrenders part of himself to his brother who he holds with high regard (Hardie-Bick, 2016).

> *"But me older brother, he was like my dad, my mum, my soulmate, my best friend"* (Matthew).

> *"Me and my brother were together day in, day out, day in, day out. We're like white on rice, we're like two gay men, we're unseparable. No, that's the best – even people say, if you know – if you ask anyone who knows, if you went to South Manchester, and they say, "Yeah, them brothers were always together." Slept in the same bedroom, joined the same gang, went to same primary, same high school, had the same friends, Shot people together, kidnapped people together, tortured people together."* (Matthew).

The relationship takes the form of a joint identity, providing solutions to issues of identity and forming part of a vehicle through which he can engage with and navigate the social world. Matthew is then able to anchor himself within particular contexts through a

collaborative process of sense-making which has also afforded him an unequivocal sense of personalised belonging.

"I always said two – sometimes two souls ain't meant to be apart." (Matthew).

In contrast, Lennox derives a sense of depersonalised belonging from the gang (Ashforth, 2001). His orientation to the gang is not predicated on interpersonal bonds with others in the group and any mention of any interpersonal attachments is limited within his wider narrative. Instead the role he adopted within two gangs he was part of enabled him to become part of something perceived as a highly structured and business-like organisation, where connectedness with others was akin to professional networking.

> *"But for me, because of the kind of gangs I was involved in, it's a group of people who are involved in crime, and they are organised, in some way, in that they have people in different, kind of, fields of work."* (Lennox)

> *"Yeah, you know, and it was exciting to know that I had big contacts, you know, if I wanted to get into other business – if I could have sorted my head out, I could have got into business with some of these people they were connected to."* (Lennox).

Consequentially Lennox comes to view his role as a gang member in a professional capacity with a clearly defined role. He frequently refers to his offending as a "job", yet the drive and ambition he expresses confers a sense of purpose, significance and meaning (Ashforth, 2001). Holding the role of a gang member provides Lennox

with something to channel himself into, and even though the role is not self-defining, the effort he puts into seeking validation from others means his performance in role requires justification.

"I got it back for them every time, you know, and so, I was a valuable asset to them… But what they liked was that every job they gave me, I pulled off, without any comebacks." (Lennox).

Adopting a perspective.

For Luke and Matthew, the perspectives of well-established former gang members were adopted as templates for possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

"My dream was to just be a gang leader since I was young, and, yeah, I just wanted to be someone well-known in the gang life world. I remember my dad had a library, right, in our house, and he used to have all these books, and one book that stood out to me, it was called Redemption, and for some reason, when I was about ten years old, I looked at the book and I started reading it, and it was about a gang member who turned his life around. But his previous life was attractive to me then, and from then, I thought, "Oh, I want to be like this guy," so after, just he became my idol, and he was a very bad guy, obviously. I mean, my dreams wasn't – yeah, my dreams were limited. Yeah, they wasn't to be anything like – just to be a criminal. Sounds bad." (Luke).

Interviewer: What you said earlier about reading that book and having aspirations to be like the gang leader, did you feel like you were achieving that?

"I was definitely achieving that. I had a lot of people around me that would do anything for me, and, yeah, it was good." (Luke).

"I just looked at it and there was a book that my brother introduced me to in, I would like to say it's got to be 2000 or 2001, Monster Kody, autobiography of Monster Kody, a Crips in America. So, we're talking this is when it first come out. So, then we switched the name of our gang, robbed all our older gang members, switched the name of it, 'cause they were cowards, really. So, we robbed their guns, switched the name of the gang… And then we just took his methods. He was ruthless, so we stepped it up, being more ruthless. The shootings went up, more broad daylight activity. In jail, like, I remember when this guy was coming in from a rival gang and it was big. I remember a part in the book where Monster Kody's like, "I'm in the jungle now, I'm in jail, I've got to get my weight up." So, I just went to gym. I just remember, you know certain things you take out the book?" (Matthew).

Where Luke was able to achieve his earlier projection of what he hoped he might become, Matthew offers more insight into the processes in actualising ideas about his future self. Adopting the perspective of Monster Kody fulfilled Matthew's identity related motives for self-expression and self-enhancement. Identifying with this high-profile gang member, Matthew begins to internalise and enact the pro-violent goals, beliefs and values of Monster Kody, and starts to think, feel and behave in an increasingly violent and reckless manner. For Matthew, these values are not mere descriptions of behaviour but function as standards which he must live by, allowing him to become a true exemplar of this valued identity.

A positive variation on this theme, relating to the transition out of the gang, is the way Sephton positions himself as a beacon of light. There is something inherently narcissistic about the way in which this redemption script was presented during the interview.

> *"Through my experience and everything that I've gone through, I now am able to travel. I even go into America, into prisons out there, now. I go all around the world, really, and I share my experiences, I share my story and it touches lives. It gives inspiration, motivation, that you can go through some really hard stuff, but you can make it out and you can change and there is hope. And, like, I'm really grateful, because there's a thing Maslow's hierarchy of needs says, "When your basic needs are not met, you're likely to go elsewhere to find them." And where – if you look at the chart, the triangle, at the top of the chart it says, "Transcendent," or something like that. And it basically means that you've got to a state of being where you are now a beacon of light for others. So, you've built yourself up all the way to the top, to now being able to help others. And I feel that I'm at that stage, but sometimes a person like that needs to go through a lot, so that he can help millions."* (Sephton)

This appears an extension of his positioning in the social world when immersed in gang life. Where conveying a sense of superiority over others has proved an adaptive strategy for Sephton, it seems that this perspective has taken over and unconsciously dominated the way he makes sense of himself and the world around him. This allows him to maintain a sense of self-continuity and self-coherence across transitions, but also represents an identity that has been constructed regardless of social context. He appears

impervious to the perception of others and believes others view him in a way that aligns with his own self-perception.

Use of narrative.

All five participants are similar; they have renounced gang membership and are still trying to make sense of their experience in some way. Where individual narratives are constructed as a method of integrating separate events into a coherent and meaningful whole (Hartog et al., 2020), the variation in which participants re-tell their stories offers some insight into their identity and understanding of themselves (McAdams, 1993; Ricoeur, 1995). For three, each narrative conveyed a sense of self-continuity and coherence yet also demonstrated that re-telling their story still functions as an active sense-making process as they tried to address some areas of uncertainty. The narratives of Sephton and Cody represent two distinct variations on this theme.

Sephton's narrative was presented as a script with little scope for deviation. Absent were any attempts to make sense of the issues and uncertainties in his experience, instead conveying that he had already undergone a process of reflection and achieved a degree of certainty about the self across time and context.

> *"So, now, I'm going to say some things and it's very deep and it's only now that I can explain these things in this deep way. So, basically, this is where it gets really deep, really deep. And I didn't know this before, when I was out there, I didn't have this knowledge, this understanding and this wisdom that I have now."* (Sephton).

> *"And it also gives you a lot of time to reflect on yourself. So, when you reflect on yourself, you start studying yourself and start saying, okay, so, how did I get here? Why am I here? How comes this keeps happening to me? And when you reflect on yourself, you start to see who you are as a person. So, that's why I can really tell you."* (Sephton).

Through this process of reflection, Sephton constructs a narrative that reframes his experience as morally acceptable (Linde, 1993). Georgakopoulou (2006) calls this a 'rehearsed self' which allows distance from the exposure of any possible uncertainties. This is particularly reflective of the rigidity that appears in his wider narrative, particularly where he displays a resistance to define himself in relation to any particular context he is situated in.

> *"I was acting as a gang member, but I wasn't a gang member."* (Sephton)

> *"And I'm saying, "Look, I'm not that kind of person," like, "you can't do that…She'd say, Oh, let's go camping." Yeah, right, I said, "Never, it's never going to happen." But she's trying to get me to go camping, and stuff like that and it never happened. I felt – it never happened. So, she's trying to get me to go camping. She's like, "Eat at the table." Like, I never eat at the table. I used to eat on the stairs. I was so weird, like, I was a weirdo. I'd come into a house and I'd eat on the stairs, like, no matter where I went. So, yeah, so, she's trying to change me to eat at the table and I always used to say, "You're trying to make me a family guy and I'm not that. I'm a road man, like, I'm a real-life road man."* (Sephton)

Throughout his narrative, Sephton displays a preoccupation with his own ideas about the self and fails to engage with the external systems that surround him. He evidently holds himself in high regard, describing himself as a "*king"* and "*a beacon of light"* who "*can help millions"* which implies an identity that is not constrained by respect for other people's subjectivity and remains indifferent to the perspective of others.

> *"Like, even when I was on the roads…I had, like, a following of people that I could control".* (Sephton)

Where he continues to treat others as objects, the lack of intersubjective processes means he is unable to obtain validation from others. However, it appears Sephton's criminal trajectory and subsequent desistance narrative brings clarity to his identity and provides him with a clear sense of purpose that sets him apart from others and society (Howells, 1978).

In contrast, Cody's narrative was inherently nostalgic. He spoke at length about past events and associates. Where Wilson (2014) refers to nostalgia as an active reconstruction of the past where one consciously or unconsciously selects what elements of their experience to remember and how to remember it, the tangential nature of Cody's narrative implied that he was unable to engage in this process of selection which conveyed a lack of control over the narrative process.

> *"And my granddad – this was before all Google and the internet, everything, but my granddad's got all the cut-outs and everything, and then I was fascinated by him, but I only met him once, because he lived in London, very rarely came up to the North, but my auntie got married and he did. And then, like I said, the Gooch gang was*

synonymous with Manchester, obviously, like I said, so when you, like, meet people, and not just meet them but become involved with them, it's touching – it's very surreal and, like I said, with Domenyk, right, the thing is with me, I'm, like – I'd obviously read about the Noonans, I'd heard about the Noonans, 14 of them, seven brothers, seven sisters…" (Cody)

Having renounced his gang membership only three years ago, it seemed Cody was yet to derive an established sense of meaning from his experience. Although nostalgia can instil life with meaning (Routledge et al., 2008), where Cody is still in the process of transition, nostalgia reflects a response to discontinuities and offers respite from current anxieties and stressors he is subject to as he tries to forge a new sense of self. This demonstrates a wider aspect of the process of deriving meaning through narrative construction. For Cody, nostalgia allows him to retain his emotional ties to his past and reaffirm previous attachments which were crucial in bolstering his self-esteem (Sedikides et al., 2008). His narrative acts as a transition bridge, encouraging him to grieve and process the loss of his role as a gang member and provide a sense of confidence for the future. It is evident that Cody can differentiate between his past self and future self and has managed to reframe his experience in a positive way. Herein lies the recognition that where the self has dealt with the complexities placed before it in the past, it can, and will do so in the future.

"I used to think, what happens if I don't live, like, an interesting life? And I thought, people live their whole lives and have no life experience and I thought, I don't want to live like that, I want – by the time it comes that I'm in an old – I'm 36 now, and I have lived a life of someone – I couldn't have wished to have as much life experience as I've had in this

36 years, and I've been away from crime for three years, so in 33 years, I've bundled a lot in." (Cody)

"One day, I processed what had happened to me, I couldn't change it, I looked at the life I've lived, I looked at my experiences, I looked at the people I've met in my life, just the madness of it, and I actually looked at – and I sort of had a wry smile on my face, thinking, if I would have been born to another family, wrapped in cotton wool, I wouldn't have had this mad life, and I love it." (Cody).

Catalysts for Change

Apparent in the narratives of all participants were moments which sparked a desire to transition towards change. These so called 'catalysts for change' are best conceptualised in terms of two interrelated sub-ordinate themes, 'epiphanies' and 'ruptures', which represent part of a wider subjective process which Baumeister (1991, 1994) calls a 'crystallisation of discontent'. A third sub-ordinate theme, 'attempts at reconciliation' refers to the processes that support participants through their transitions and restore a sense of normality.

Epiphanies.

Denzin (1989) defined an epiphany as a moment of lived experience identifiable as a turning point in an understanding of oneself and one's relationship to the world. For two participants, these transitional moments precipitated their decision to become gang affiliated during adolescence and were inherently positive (Chilton, 2015). They offered an escape from the trauma and adversity that was then prevalent within their lives.

> *"They were Pastors in a church, basically, so I've got three brothers and one sister, but for me, I was so alone. I was the black sheep of the family, and I just didn't feel like my parents loved me, and so that's what my life was like. Basically, I grew up in a house full of 20 drug addicts… We never had our own house, it was always full of people that was messed up. So, I believed that my parents didn't care about me or love me because they spent so much time with all these other people, helping them, and they never spent time with me. So, I just thought – that's why I felt alone*." (Luke)

Despite being surrounded by others, Luke was unable to connect emotionally with his family. The absence of companionship culminated in feelings of loneliness (Dahlberg, 2007), further exacerbated by the fact his needs were continually overlooked, underpinning his belief that he did not belong. It is perhaps unsurprising that Luke's epiphany occurs during a situation where he finally feels valued and accepted by others.

> *"I got involved in a fight, someone was trying to bully him, I won it, and I was surrounded by about ten people. Two of them were my friends and they were cheering me on and they all said, "Come join our gang, come join our gang," and, for some reason, I remember looking at Josh and I just felt – I felt loved. I know it's – that was my reality. I felt loved and I felt that that was what I needed, because I wasn't getting it at home and I felt like this was – so, from that day, I chose to join a gang."* (Luke).

In this moment, Luke is able to establish both a physical and emotional connection with others which allows him to re-evaluate his beliefs about the world around him.

For Cody, his transitional moment causes him to re-evaluate his beliefs about the self. The significant abuse and rejection he experienced as a child rendered him powerless and he alludes to a psychological and physical weakness given he was unable to assert himself. His tone in this excerpt indicates that he had accepted such a negative perception of himself as reality.

> *"I had really big ears and I was being bullied at school, I'm talking from a young age, like primary school and stuff, I was bullied relentlessly. Then I had my ears pinned back, but I was still a weak individual,* I *was being bullied at school, I was coming home, my mum was battering me."* (Cody)

> *"Now, obviously people knew I was a weak individual…cause I was skinny as hell. I was under – I was malnourished and everything."* (Cody)

His epiphany manifests following an act of explosive violence, initiating a shift in the way he views himself and also offers a new perspective on his future.

> *"But all the anger that I had in me from all those years, right, this guy – that was his aim to get a fight with me, and people were gathering around, "Fight, fight, fight," and I don't know why or how, but this inner demon was loud and I battered this lad, I used all my boxing training that I'd been doing, I absolutely battered this kid, to the point that it was – it's very cliched to say, it was a red mist descended over me and that day was probably one of the most liberating days in my life because I literally knew from that point I can fight here…so, it was very liberating, 'cause I thought, like, violence is a good tool to control people and to stop bad things happening".* (Cody)

As with Luke, this transitional moment is positive. It provides Cody with a sense of freedom, liberating him from earlier feelings of powerlessness and weakness and allowing him to reinvent himself by drawing on notions of strength and masculinity. No longer is he a skinny, weak individual that has to suffer at the hands of others but someone who can exert power and control as a means of protecting himself. For Cody, these were particularly valuable traits in the context of his abusive experience and elicited a belief that he needed to be more powerful than the next person in order to survive.

The notion of reinventing oneself is also pertinent to Cody's later decision to desist from crime. He experiences a second epiphany in adulthood after hearing of his mother's ill health:

> *"I'm one of the biggest lads on the wing, but not that size counts for anything in prison, but – so anyway, I literally came off the phone and someone just pulled a lightbulb in my head. So, when my mum comes on a visit a few hours later, I'm sit there, I'm looking at the bags under her eyes, I'm looking at her hands getting older, her breathing, 'cause of her smoking, and I looked at her and I was like, this was three years ago and I thought, fucking hell, I thought, I just – I grew – in prison, and I'm literally looking at my mum and I thought, fucking hell, this is really affecting you."* (Cody).

His epiphany is triggered when he realises the impact of his behaviour on his mother's health and feels shame about his core self. As Tangney et al. (2007) observe, shame is a pervasive and powerful emotion. This is unfamiliar for Cody and challenges his masculinity.

An interesting observation is how this situation manifests as a reversal of his earlier epiphany, where vulnerability was eschewed in favour of masculine ideals.

> *"I don't know why, we're not huggy people, and I stood up, the visit had finished and I give my mum – I give her a big, big bear hug, and I had tears in my eyes. I wouldn't cry on no visit, some fucking male bravado bullshit, so I've just let my mum just walk out on her own, see, I watched her, I physically watched her leave, and then she was waving and I waved and I was fucking choking back tears and my brain, the side of my brain was fucking aching because I was trying to keep these tears in. I've gone back to the cell, I cried my eyes out, fell asleep, woke up in the next morning and I thought, I am not going back to prison. So, a few weeks later, ends up leaving the jail, my mum picks me up and I said to my mum, I said, "I will never, ever, ever put you through what I put you through again."* (Cody)

In allowing himself to succumb to his own vulnerability, the emotional experience represents a 'crystallisation of discontent' (Baumeister, 1991; 1994). When confronted with the fragility of his mother, Cody can no longer minimise the impact of his behaviour on others and becomes motivated to change.

Ruptures.

In contrast to epiphanies, ruptures hold negative connotations and represent the catastrophes that occur in the lives of participants causing them to question their sense of self and continuity (Pemberton et al., 2019; Zittoun, 2007). By interrupting the normal flow of events, these ruptures evoke emotional responses that propel participants into a state of

uncertainty. For three participants, ruptures emerge through diverse and very personal experiences of loss and operate as turning points for change.

Given the importance of their relationship, the death of his brother has a particularly profound impact on Matthew. His narrative recall of the event suggests that he is still trying to make sense of this overwhelming grief.

> *"But that's – think of it, and he's my best friend. I seen him a week before, 'cause I was on a – I was in an open prison, so, I got to go home for five days. So, I'd just seen him Monday to Friday, phoned him Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, then Wednesday morning, you have to –another inmate tells you your brother's dead and then your mum clarifies it… And you're locked in the cell and you're just thinking of your dead brother, you're sleeping, you're speaking to him. You wake up, you think on my own, no, he's really dead."* (Matthew)

He describes the loss as having "*broke my soul"*, a powerful and poetic labelling of a loss which invokes thought around the literal translation of schizophrenia; 'skheizen' meaning 'to split' and 'phren' meaning 'heart or mind'. Whilst there is no evidence that Matthew suffered with psychosis, understanding the impact of loss as a spiritual emergence offers meaning to his experience. Defined by Grof and Grof (1989) as a breakdown of meaning that leads to transformative growth, the concept of spiritual emergence is grounded in psychosis yet universal to all human experience (Webb, 2014). For Matthew, who until now has navigated the world through a shared identity with his brother, this death represents a breakdown of this relational system. Matthew is subsequently left alone, challenged by his

own autonomy where he must renegotiate his own identity and establish a new relationship with the world.

For Sephton, the notion of loss is multi-faceted, with the impact of several events culminating in a 'crystallisation of discontent' (Baumeister, 1991; 1994). Initially triggered by the death of his stepbrother, a cognitive shift is precipitated creating a dissonance between his present and possible self.

> *"It came to a point where I was, like, I think, yeah, my stepbrother died and I just – it hit me hard and then, for the first time, I just wanted to chill. I didn't want to be that person. I wanted to just chill."* (Sephton)

Sephton subsequently receives an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection which he perceives as a loss of freedom, invoking an unfamiliar vulnerability and loss of hope.

> *"And then, I went to prison that next – just after that, this is when my stepbrother died and I got IPP sentence. That was like a life licence that they gave me. But then, I appealed it while I was in jail. It was probably one of the most scariest moments when I got the life licence. Yeah, it was not nice, you know, that I thought wow, I'll probably be in here for many years...I said to myself, "I'm a lost cause." That's what I said to myself. I said, "That's it, I'm a lost cause, I might as well die." That's how I went and I wanted to kill myself."* (Sephton).

Through these moments, Sephton begins to question the way he thinks about and presents himself, slowly realising that his gang lifestyle is no longer the attractive prospect it once was. However, his catalyst for change occurs within the context of a romantic relationship, creating a further rupture which challenges the whole sphere of his experience (Zittoun, 2007). By forging an emotional connection, Sephton's vulnerability is exacerbated and he begins to disconnect from aspects of the self that once functioned to protect his emotions (Baumeister & Lobbestael, 2011).

> *"But then that's – but then a girl came in my life and she started talking to me and then that's when I said, do you know what? Let me say sorry to some of these people and I started saying sorry to people, yeah…when I started to see their hearts and stuff, it really got to me and I was like, wow, why am I doing this to people? Like, this ain't cool."* (Sephton).

This propels him into a state of uncertainty where narrative disruption requires a process of re-calibration in order to make sense of his experience.

> *"But I'm just – I just kept asking contrary questions, like, "But why this, then?" and, "Why did I go through this?" and, "Why, why, why?" I just wanted to know why, if this is it, then, why am I like this and why is the world like this - do you know what I mean?"* (Sephton).

Offering a further variation on this theme, Lennox' rupture occurs as he experiences a loss of trust and loyalty from others in the gang, leaving him feeling undermined. In this

moment, he realises he serves a functional role to the gang and that his connections to others within it were superficial.

> *"My gang wouldn't hand it to the Police or the Solicitor. He said, "Lennox, you're making so much money for us in prison, more than what our guys are doing outside, we need you to stay here a bit longer." But I thought, they're having a laugh at me and I thought, I ain't doing that. I would rather be out, don't want to be here and so, they still wouldn't get me out and I kicked off. I threatened them all. I threatened to kill 'em and I threatened them that if any of them come in there, I'd make all the gay prisoners rape 'em, and I just became so evil, and the rage in me just boiled up so bad. So it got so bad I was just so prepared to kill, and I was prepared to kill in front of Officers, just to kill the person. Whereas, you try to wait until the Officers are not around and then you take them into somewhere, but I got so, so evil."* (Lennox).

> *"There's some other things that happened that changed that, but like, I don't know if you would und – I can explain it, but it's – I don't know if you'd understand it, it's.... Let down by all of my friends. It broke my heart."* (Lennox)

This is a highly emotional moment for Lennox. Considering that he has compromised his own sense of self at the expense of fitting in with others, it is understandable how he perceived this as a catastrophic moment threatening his very existence. In some way exacerbated by a loss of control as a result of incarceration, Lennox is torn between an intense rage and incomprehensible sadness at this social rejection whereas the threat of returning to the isolated existence he experienced as a child becomes real.

Attempts at reconciliation.

Following an epiphany or rupture, individuals must undergo a process of re-equilibration to restore a sense of continuity and integrity of the self (Zittoun, 2007). These processes reduce uncertainty by creating normality and, for participants in this study, can be classified according to two further sub-ordinate themes: religion and redemption.

Religion.

Overlapping with the earlier sub-ordinate theme 'adopting a perspective', Giordano et al., (2008) suggest that religion can act as a cognitive template for proceeding as a reformed individual. This was true for three of the participants in the study where religious conversion emerged following their experience of a "crystallisation of discontent", allowing them to abandon their former gang identities and build new selves underpinned by shared religious beliefs (Hallet & McCoy, 2004; Tanyi, 2006; Whitehead, 2003).

Following the disruption in his narrative, Sephton embarks on a search to address motives of identity, meaning and belonging.

> *"And it was that moment when I started to grasp some of this stuff about Jesus, some of this stuff about the Bible. And certain things was happening in my life that caused me to start looking for God. Like, I went so low at that time, where I was like, no, I need a higher power to change me…So, I was looking for something and I went to the Muslims, 'cause I was around a lot of them…I went towards them and they're Muslims and they read the Koran. So, I was talking to them and saying, "What's the Koran about, what's this?" And then, they was all telling me about what they believe*

> *in. And then, I saw Jehovah Witnesses and then Jehovah Witnesses was talking to me, and I was saying, "What do you believe in?" and all of that."* (Sephton).

Where he experiences a loss of hope, religion offers a source of behaviour change and an opportunity to re-conceptualise his identity. Sephton subsequently engages in a process of exploration, giving consideration to different religious identities in search of something that fits with his existing belief system to reduce aversive emotions associated with uncertainty (Jonas et al., 2014).

For Matthew, a state of liminality triggered by the loss of his brother leaves him more receptive to transformational experiences. Where he can no longer navigate the world as a unit with his brother, religion offers him salvation and guides him through the uncertainty he was experiencing during a period of crisis. It provides a viable solution to matters of identity and meaning, offering a ready-made perspective and new set of values that help him develop his own meaning in the world.

> *"That's when I found God, and that's why I know God's real… I know what saved me from killing this guy that killed my brother and the other people that were involved in it. And one point not committing suicide when I was in a dark place, that was God… I was going to – we had a plan and there was a lot of people going to get hurt and quite a few people were going to get shot up. So, God said to me, I've got to take – to save you – to save the rest of your brothers, I've got to take you out*." (Matthew).

There is a lack of autonomy in this narrative, something also displayed by Luke, where religion is framed as an outside force that not only saves him but offers a release from his

previous identity (Hallett & McCoy, 2015). Both believe that religion was able to carry them away from their gang identities, mitigating the role of personal agency and reflecting a sense of helplessness in their desistance journey.

> *"So, I went church one day and I said, "God"– I didn't listen to the message, but I went to the front. I said, "God, if you're real, help me." Yeah? That's all I said, I said, "God, if you're real, help me," and some people might say this is just a rush of adrenaline or strong emotion, but it wasn't, I know what I felt, and I felt God come, and I felt a warm presence on me that I've never felt before in my life. And at that moment, something in me changed, and I started to cry, I started to break down, and I've never cried in years, since I was a kid, 'cause obviously, I was told, "Don't cry, men don't cry."* (Luke).

Where Luke has spent much of his life longing to feel loved and cared for by others, the superficiality of the relationships he has with others in the gang are forgotten as he experiences an embodied spiritual connection with a higher power. Finally, he feels a sense of belonging, representing a moment of divine-human intersubjectivity (Bracken, 2018) and his subsequent emotional display represents a transformational moment where he can break free from the constraining aspects of his own masculinity (Deuchar, 2018).

Redemption.

For many of the participants, the force that underpinned the process of self-reformation was generativity, defined by McAdams and de St Aubin (1998) as 'concern for and commitment to promoting the next generation'.

> *"I see it in a different light because I can use this to help other kids, and I'm sorry for the people who got hurt by my hands in the past. But the only way I can show you that I'm sorry is to stop other kids, who may turn out to be like I was, from going down that route, and so, that's what I do*." (Lennox)

> *"I believe that's what God put me here for, and everything I've gone through in my life, everything I've experienced, is to bring me to this point today, where I can help adult gang members turn their lives around. I felt the urge to go to the streets and go back to where I come from, and it wasn't to join a gang, it was to let them know there's a way out."* (Luke)

> *"Yeah, I'm going to let you use your pain to help these kids. And I really believe if I can do this, without getting angry and taking revenge, or hurting somebody, I believe I've got a chance of getting back into heaven."* (Matthew)

Matthew, Luke and Lennox have established their own charitable organisations to support gang affiliated individuals and divert them away from a trajectory much like their own. Establishing a sense of generativity through a clearly defined role allows them to assume an identity of a 'changed person' and also fills a void in their lives left open after renouncing their gang membership. As demonstrated in the results of the systematic review in chapter one, successful rehabilitation of gang members is more likely if they have a role they are able to transition into, and in parallel with the results of Perrin and Blagden's (2014) study of Listeners in prison, the mentor role that all three participants have adopted offers purpose and meaning in their new life and offers redemption from their past mistakes, operating as a form of post-traumatic growth (Maruna, 2001; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Matthew in particular

positions himself as a wounded healer, reframing his own experience of pain as a gift to younger generations (White, 2003).

General Discussion

By adopting an idiographic perspective of a hard to reach population, the present study offers a unique insight into the trajectories of those with lived experience of gang life. It sheds light on the psychological processes that were evoked as each transitioned into and out of the gang by understanding how they positioned themselves in their social worlds, reconciled matters of identity, meaning and belonging and managed emerging catalysts for change. Where an idiographic approach cannot result in claims at a group or population level, the findings offer theoretical generalisability (Smith et al., 2009) and develop our understanding of existing theoretical perspectives that explain gang membership, identity and desistance.

Above all, the findings suggest that transitions, both in and out of the gang, offered an opportunity for participants to construct a viable identity in response to the uncertainty arising from difficult past experiences. In line with a symbolic interactionist perspective, participants were able to construct subjective gang identities through interactions with unique social worlds they found themselves positioned in during their early years (Charmaz et al., 2019). For many of the participants, the construction of their relevant gang identities was an active choice in response to the precarious circumstances in which they grew up. In some ways, they offer an extension of Thornberry et al.'s (2003) interactional theory that gang membership results from reciprocal relationships between peer groups, social structures and weakened social bonds. Rather than Thornberry's et al.'s (2003) perspective that these factors

reinforce delinquent behaviour, the present findings suggest that the construction of a viable gang identity in response to these situations represented a functional decision which allowed them to rebuff the victimisation, rejection and stigmatisation they experienced from those around them.

Where the viability of this new identity required validation from others, some of the men began to present themselves in a way that facilitated belonging despite compromising their own values and sense of self. This aspect of their identity became a performance and they were able to disconnect from alternative identities and began to view themselves in response to the perceptions of others, consistent with Cooley's (1902) theory of the Looking Glass Self. Where association with the gang subsequently reinforced the violent and anti-social behaviour enacted through this identity, some internalised the valuations of others which manifest in a sense of pride and achievement which only served to further perpetuate the behaviour. This develops the social control aspect of Wood and Alleyne's (2010) unified theory of gang involvement, alluding to one potential mechanism of which social controls are internalised and personal values are discarded in favour of new norms. Further validation was achieved by the varying ways these men orientated themselves to the gang, as a career or profession (Carvalho & Soares, 2016) as an extension of family (Mahoney, 2014; Regan, 1996) or need for status and superiority (Gravel et al., 2018).

Despite the functional nature of these gang identities, they did not become all-consuming and for many were only elicited in certain contexts. Their gang identities instead represented a distinct role identity and only one aspect of the *Me* in James's (1890) theory of the multiplicity of self. For the men in the study, the subjective importance of one's role identity and subsequent capacity to reduce existing uncertainty was reflected in their ability

to reconcile matters of identity, meaning and belonging once positioned in the role and thus consistent with Ashforth's (2001) transitional framework. Yet it was clear that all were still grappling with issues surrounding the renunciation of gang membership in some way, and their narratives offer insights into how they derive a sense of purpose, unity and coherence from their lives (Habernas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams & McLean, 2013).

In entering their desistance journeys, participants were once again challenged to construct a viable identity as their identification for the gang was relinquished. Whilst this process was more convoluted for some than for others, the analysis revealed that all of those interviewed for this study had the capacity to transform their lives and work towards their own path of desistance with little help from criminal justice agencies or formal rehabilitative interventions. This is consistent with Paternoster and Bushway's (2009) identity-based theory of desistance where individuals are positioned as agents of change. All five participants portrayed themselves as agentic individuals, actively choosing to pursue change with intent to overcome matters of dissatisfaction in their lives which represented significant variation. By further highlighting the role of epiphanies and ruptures in initiating the process of desistance, the findings offer greater contextualisation to Giordano et al.'s (2002) 'hooks for change' by contextualising these moments within a negative emotional response, e.g. the guilt and shame Cody feels about the impact of his behaviour on his mother and the betrayal as Lennox's former associates withdrew their loyalty. The significance of loss in these moments further elucidates the cognitive vulnerability of participants as they strive to reconcile with matters of identity, meaning and belonging.

Strengths and Limitations

A notable strength of the study lies within the methodology's ability to present themes that remain personal to the individual narratives of each participant, revealing an intimate and

nuanced account of one's trajectory through the gang from the standpoint of those who experience it (Jeog & Othman, 2016; Noon, 2018). This goes some way in presenting a heavily stereotyped population (Howell, 2007) as individuals with their own unique and personal needs (Stevens, 2012), and offers a voice to those within the CJS whose voices go unheard.

A weakness of the study is the subjective nature of the analysis and the way in which the researcher may have approached the data with her own bias and preconceptions. The notion of reflexivity is attended to in the third chapter of this thesis and verification of themes were discussed during supervision to maintain rigour of interpretation, yet with any research positioned with an interpretivist paradigm, there remains a possibility of multiple truths that might emerge from the data if subjected to an alternative interpretation (Levers, 2013).

It is also worth considering that all participants had placed themselves in the public domain as part of their desistance journey, with preliminary internet research demonstrating that some possessed an ability to discuss and reflect on their lives in an established and eloquent manner. Ultimately this led to the collection of a rich data set despite where matters of power and dominance emerged.[7] However, where Tuffour (2017) notes that some do not possess the reflective capacity to engage fully in this methodology, adoption of such an elitist view would likely prevent us engaging in further research with gang members or individuals involved in the CJS. Instead, it will be important for future researchers in this area that utilise a phenomenological approach to tailor their interview strategy to support individuals to engage fully with the methodology to ensure they are afforded a fair opportunity to share their experience.

[7] See reflective epilogue for discussion of these issues

Implications for Practice, Policy and Research

In drawing attention to the salient aspects of experience of transitions out of the gang, the research presents some ideas for the development of future rehabilitative interventions. Consistent with Paternoster and Bushway (2009), the findings demonstrate the agentic nature of transitions, with each participant establishing their own path towards desistance following a narrative rupture. This highlights a need for supportive interventions, capable of recognising these significant moments that might precipitate desistance and supporting (ex)gang-members to renegotiate a pro-social role in society. Mirroring the findings of chapter one, the role of religious and spiritual organisations should not be underestimated in offering desisting gang members with a new perspective to channel themselves into and develop a new self.

For those who remain embedded within gangs whilst progressing through the CJS, interventions to develop insight and foster motivation to change might draw on themes of 'positioning self in a social world' and 'solutions to identity, meaning and belonging' to assist in the development of collaborative formulations. Similarly, the importance of Ashforth's (2001) framework of identity, meaning and belonging in understanding gang related transitions offers clinical implications to foster self-understanding and inform rehabilitation. Much like the Good Lives Model and Deci and Ryan's (2012) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Ashforth's framework offers a strengths-based approach to intervention by presenting a set of psychological needs that when met promote self-enhancement and fulfilment (Andrews et al., 2011). There is also considerable overlap between the needs in all three models. For example, relatedness (GLM and SDT) shares similarities with Ashforth's belonging, autonomy, competence (SDT) and excellence (GLM)

have parallels with control, and the GLM primary goods of inner peace, spirituality and pleasure provide meaning and purpose to people's lives. Despite being a popular rehabilitative framework in forensic settings, there is no high-quality evidence (Netto et al., 2014) that the GLM reduces recidivism and so Ashforth's framework offers an alternative rehabilitative framework to help embed an individual in a particular context. By assisting a gang-member to consider how they are meeting their needs for identity, meaning control and belonging through gang involvement before exploring how these needs could be met by alternative roles may promote the construction of possible selves, thus facilitating the process of change. Furthermore, assisting a gang-member to reconcile these needs whilst integrating into a particular pro-social role would support their identification within this role, leading to greater enactment of the role identity and provide a meaningful chance of rehabilitation. This would warrant further exploration before any formal interventions were devised, but holds potential given the salience of these motives within the current sample.

Phenomenological research can broaden our understanding of distinct phenomena and operate as building blocks for further study (Neubauer et al., 2019). Where this study is the first of its kind, there remains wide scope for further qualitative research to explore the ways in which transitions are experienced by ex-gang members in advance of more specific quantitative research to test any emerging hypotheses. Possible avenues for this include a comparative study with female gang members who are frequently cited as having different roles and experience of gang life (Centre for Social Justice, 2014; Alleyne & Pritchard, 2016), exploration of how gang members experience transitions that occur whilst identifying as a gang member (e.g. incarceration) as well as longitudinal research to capture the unfolding nature of these processes over time.

The narrative study of gangs could also be further extended through use of different methodologies. Canter and Young's (2015) 'Life As A Film' interview framework has some utility in this area. Based on McAdam's (1993) "Life story interview", the LAAF framework has been described as "an ultimate explanation of self and identity" and invites participants to describe their life as a film; outlining the genre, plot, main scenes, characters and ending (Tzatsky, 2018). Adoption of this intended quantitative methodology as a qualitative interview framework executed face-to-face or via a questionnaire format would offer potential participants full autonomy in presenting a manifestation of the self that encompasses important wholly subjective narrative points (Tzatsky, 2018).

Conclusion

As the first phenomenological study conducted with ex-gang members, the chapter represents a step in moving towards a process-led exploration of the experience of gang membership. Whilst the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population of gang members, the insights presented and discussed above indicate the unique nature of individual experience, something that has thus far been masked by the numerous quantitative studies that reduce knowledge of gang membership to risk factors and effects. Yet the true complexities of gang membership will never be understood within a single thesis, and both academics and policy makers must endeavour to work alongside gang members where possible. In breaking away from media stereotypes and re-positioning these individuals as experiential experts, identifying how they reconcile their needs for identity, meaning, control and belonging, not only offers them a voice, but also offers a tangible framework of how their own processes of change can help others.

General Conclusion

When considered sequentially, the findings from chapter one and chapter two are complimentary in elucidating the processes of change involved in the trajectories of gang members and reinforce the importance of identity in gang membership. Themes of 'positioning self in a social world' and 'solutions to identity, meaning and belonging' reflect the processes through which individuals construct and maintain their gang member identities in response to precarious and relatively hostile social contexts, whilst also balancing them in a hierarchy of other roles. Although less explicitly related to identity, the theme 'catalysts for change' highlights the agentic nature of these transitions as participants were prompted to re-evaluate their beliefs about the self. At this stage, the ability to generate a possible self by re-negotiating aspects of the self or adopting a perspective (e.g. religion or role models) can help reconcile the uncertainty associated with this transitional moment, whilst also increasing motivation to change. If gang members are then able to develop and build on these ideas about a possible self through the mechanisms of self-construction and self-discovery before transitioning into a pro-social role, use of Ashforth's framework in understanding their ability to reconcile their motives of identity, meaning, control and belonging will increase the salience of this new role in comparison to their identity as a gang member, thus increasing their likelihood of disengagement and desistance.

Although not generalisable to the wider population of gang members, use of qualitative methodology highlights the importance of individual differences in this cohort and use of Ashforth's framework offers a new perspective on how the subjective importance of these various role identities can be rebalanced. With regards to the practical implications discussed in both chapters, if the mechanisms of change identified in the systematic review

are considered sequentially to develop and intervention pathway for gang members in the CJS, the themes identified in chapter 2 can be used a framework to inform facilitators of the variation in meaning attributed to gang membership, as well as offering insight into the challenges experienced as they re-negotiate aspects of their identity.

In conclusion, the thesis meets its intended aim of exploring the processes of change experienced by gang members as they transition into and out of gangs. However, the insights presented represent only a small piece of the puzzle, and further research is needed to deepen our understanding of the experience of this hidden and hard to reach population. The researcher hopes that doing so will create a shift towards a more holistic approach that will contribute to the Government aim of implementing a public health approach to gang violence.

CHAPTER THREE

Reflective Epilogue

This reflective epilogue functions as an ethnographic memoir, 'a personal tale' of the research which offers insight into my doctoral journey (Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Detailed here are my motives for the research, deliberation of the problems that emerged and a critical examination of my own reflexivity. The chapter concludes by considering how the research has impacted my professional identity.

The Research Purpose

It is well documented that doctoral research requires unreserved commitment, alongside the importance of selecting a topic that appeals to the researcher's pre-occupations and passions (Russell and Kelly, 2002).

Gangs have always fascinated me. Growing up in a privileged area on the outskirts of Birmingham, stories of the postcode wars between the Johnson Crew and Burger Bar Boys that played out in local media offered insight into a mysterious world that was far removed from my reality. After driving past the crime scene of a high-profile murder in 2003, I realised this was a reality for many yet could not understand how status and loyalty could come to mean more than human life.

I later entered a voluntary placement in a local prison and was involved in the process of selecting gang affiliated individuals for a pilot intervention programme. I was intrigued as I reviewed the offence histories of these men, reflecting on their behaviour through the lens of social psychology yet the lack of clinical contact meant my understanding of this world

remained scarce. It was only having spent three years working as a police officer in two of London's most gang affected boroughs that I became attuned to the stark reality of this once mysterious underworld. Only then could I look beyond the violence to see the vulnerability of these men, the precarious nature of the lives they were living and the fragility of the families and communities that surrounded them.

I developed a more holistic-person centred approach as I left the police and transitioned into a clinical role. Working in the same gang affected areas, I sat alongside gang members and explored their lived experience. Listening to accounts fraught with trauma, victimisation and marginalisation, I shifted away from my earlier 'working personality' as a police officer (Skolnick, 1998) towards a more compassionate and empathetic stance. I relied on literature to broaden my clinical knowledge of this population and facilitate a collaborative process of sense making but noticed a paucity of research pertaining to adult gang members. As I recognised an opportunity to develop knowledge of this population, the seeds of the research were sown.

I was keen to understand more about the factors that perpetuate gang membership over time. Psychological research in this area was lacking, and I immersed myself in criminological studies that indicated that gangs could be organised, hierarchical structures with clearly defined roles and expectations (Densley, 2012; Miezczowski, 1986; Pitts, 2008; Venkatesh, 1997: Windle & Briggs, 2015). Despite this work lying theoretically outside of my own discipline, I felt drawn to this literature and hoped my research might bridge the gap between criminology and psychology. I became preoccupied with the idea of 'originality' and having witnessed the detrimental impact of gang membership through policing, I adopted a pragmatist worldview (Creswell, 2014). Just as pragmatism stipulates that knowledge should

be both useful and applicable (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004), I wanted the findings to have utility and contribute towards understanding the issue of gang related offending.

Having learnt more about myself through the doctoral journey, I look back and consider this aim bold and overambitious. Dunleavy (2003) warns this is common for those at the start of their PhD journey, yet my desire to offer a 'fix' represents a solution-orientated approach that paralleled my clinical work. After completing self-directed reading on the topic of authoring a PhD (Evans, Gruba & Zobel, 2011; Petre & Rugg, 2012), I realised I had misinterpreted the notion of providing a 'novel contribution' as the provision of something ground-breaking. I questioned if my intentions were grandiose but felt my desire to produce something of value came from a place of low self-esteem, driven through comparisons between myself and my doctoral peers whom I perceived as more knowledgeable and experienced.

I subsequently became aware of the pitfalls of my overzealous intentions and how this could manifest in a thesis filled with promises of a theoretical breakthrough that may never materialise (Dunleavy, 2003). During supervision, I reframed my thoughts in a way that would offer value to the literature rather than radical solutions. Saldaña (2018) talks about gifting ideas, a concept that held particular salience at this time as I considered the value that my own ideas about the psychological processes could have within academic and lay communities.

The Hurdles

My enthusiasm for the research peaked mid-way through the course and I swiftly lost momentum; something I feel ashamed and embarrassed to admit. My concerns ultimately lay

in the perceptions of others and whether such an admission might be understood as a lack of ambition, a disregard for the project or even laziness. These feelings activated my perfectionist schema and I wanted to avoid presenting these issues to a viva panel, thus debating their inclusion in this chapter. Yet despite feeling exposed, the difficulties that followed were an important part of my research journey and warrant further discussion.

Although unwilling to externalise the problem, I lost motivation shortly after my co-ordinating supervisor took on the role of research supervisor. In the absence of a psychologist in the workplace, I relied heavily on co-ordinating supervision to address matters relating to clinical work, and research matters frequently slipped to the bottom of the agenda as I expressed confidence about data collection. Months passed and this self-assurance deteriorated as I faced ongoing difficulties with participant recruitment. Gangs are a hard to reach population (Eidson et al., 2017) but I underestimated the difficulties I would encounter. Faced with numerous rejections and non-responses from potential participants, I became frustrated and questioned the altruistic motives of these individuals involved in their own charitable work, failing to understand why they would not support the research. When sharing my frustrations with peers, I was resistant to suggestions which might support the recruitment. I was blind to the impact of this self-defeating behaviour at the time, yet now with greater self-awareness, understand this was a coping strategy where I was trying to avoid activation of my unrelenting standards schema.

Months passed in this state of avoidance until I was confronted with the inadequacy of my progress during an annual review meeting. I was on treacherous ground having been referred to the final review stage, interpreted as a final chance to prove myself or risk a dissolution of the project. This was an uncomfortable position and elicited feelings of shame,

anger and embarrassment. Where I was experiencing difficulties in my supervisory relationship, I instinctively externalised blame to my supervisor for a perceived lack of support and guidance. Accepting responsibility for my own shortcomings felt impossible as this perceived failure was overwhelmingly damaging to my sense of self, however processing these emotions led to my own crystallisation of discontent (Bauer et al., 2005). Weighing up my options, I felt the negative connotations of exiting the doctorate without the research component would only confirm my belief I had failed and instead, I spent time reflecting on and addressing the self-imposed barriers I had created.

Moving Forward

Having re-established contact with my original supervisor, I spent time re-engaging with my thesis, distancing myself from the 'papers model' that felt disjointed. I had two loosely defined research questions representing two tentatively linked chapters yet had failed to define an overarching thread for the whole thesis (Dunleavy, 2003). As I mapped out thoughts and concepts, I was conscious of regressing and regretted not taking the time to sit with this process at an earlier stage. Despite this, I emerged with a clearly defined statement of purpose which allowed me to outlined specific goals within a wider structure. Compartmentalising the research in this way allowed me to plan my progress using a Gantt Chart, increasing productivity and efficacy of time management.

Understanding that a sample of three participants was inadequate, I had to address the earlier frustrations I had experienced during the recruitment phase. Where these frustrations were directed towards potential participants, I noticed I had drifted away from the person-centred approach I was developing in my clinical work and began to embody my prior working personality as a police officer. I became concerned that I was conceptualising these

individuals as perpetrators, a position which was likely to have compromised by ability to fully explore and unfold the meaning of each participant's lived world (Kvale, 2006). Considering my own reflexivity in supervision as recommended by Elliott et al. (2012), I realised that I was not mentalising and had become preoccupied with my own goals. I had to step back and consider the literature to understand how the characteristics and perspectives of these ex-gang members were influencing this low response rate. Perhaps they were highly sceptical about assurances of confidentiality (Bourgois, 1990) and avoiding contact with unfamiliar individuals (Becker et al., 2014), or maybe they had mental health issues related to trauma of living in highly violence communities that might challenge research. Having already tried to utilise a gatekeeper to assist with recruitment, I adjusted my communication strategy and focused on developing trust with potential participants rather than approaching with a 'hard sell' of the research (Vigil, 2007). I recognise that this process mirrors the development of the therapeutic relationship, giving me greater appreciation for the scientist-practitioner model (Jones & Mehr, 2007).

Reflections on the Systematic Review

As participant recruitment was ongoing, I focused attention on the systematic review. Embarking on this chapter was challenging. I was entering into an unknown area and relied heavily on books to familiarise myself with the process. With much of the guidance focused on quantitative reviews, I struggled to think flexibly about this structured and rigorous framework would fit with the exploratory nature of thesis. With evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of gang intervention programmes lacking, the uncertainty I felt about refining the question became paralysing as I tried to confront, and not avoid my perfectionist schemas.

I scrutinised the literature to obtain some clarity over this dilemma and identified a useful article by Pearson (2004) that said; “evidence-based practice is not exclusively about effectiveness; it is about basing practice on the best available evidence” (p.48). I thought more about the importance of qualitative data in understanding the processes of change in existing gang intervention programmes. A scoping review of the qualitative literature relating to gang intervention programmes facilitated a shift from a positivist to an interpretivist worldview, and I was able to think more creatively about how a systematic review of this literature could offer insight into the processed underpinning gang intervention programmes from a person-centred perspective (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Munn et al., 2018). This in itself was an entirely novel contribution to the literature and sparked an excitement that broke my negative mindset.

Having refined the question, I moved through the stages as outlined by Booth et al., (2012). I experienced the familiar negative thought patterns that emerged in my clinical work and longed for the support of a research team to gain clarity over matters of inclusion, develop ideas about concepts presented in the selected papers and provide reassurance that I was synthesising the literature in the correct way. Supervision was used to alleviate these apprehensions as I discussed my tentative findings, becoming more attuned to the interplay between subjectivity and objectivity in qualitative research. I subsequently understood how my own subjectivity had facilitated the objective comprehension of the included studies by ensuring that the psychological significance of identified concepts resonated with the text (Ratner, 2002).

With greater confidence, I immersed myself in the data and started to enjoy the iterative process of meta-ethnography, setting out to ‘make a whole’ out of a theoretically

fragmented literature base (Campbell et al., 2003). This process felt containing, with the existing data offering a structure to which I could apply my own creative thinking and prompted me to consider my role as "the research instrument" (Dodgson, 2019). Consistent with an interpretivist worldview (Levers, 2013), it is possible that an alternative line of argument may have been developed by a different review team, or even by myself at a different stage of my career. My conclusions only represent one possible interpretation of the data (Noblit & Hare, 1988) and were influenced by my own values, perceptions and choices as a researcher. Understanding this facilitated a moment of growth as I became more attuned to the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research as a means of ensuring transparency and credibility (Berger, 2015; Palaganas, 2017).

Reflections on the Primary Research

Qualitative research is contextual, occurring in a specific time and place between two or more people (Dodgson, 2019). With the primary research chapter oriented within an interpretivist paradigm where my background and expertise comprise a critical component of the analytic process (Emery & Anderman, 2020), it was important for me to deconstruct the research encounter and adopt a reflexive position to examine my role in the co-construction of knowledge alongside participants (Horsburgh, 2003; Patnaik, 2013).

Dynamics of the research relationship.

As a white, middle-class female in her early thirties occupying a role within the CJS, I was aware of my position as an outsider to the sample. I noted in some ethnographic studies that the researcher shared some characteristics with the gang members they sought to study, thus granting them some degree of insider status. For example, Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2013) explain their personification of a version of Chicano masculinity facilitated

acceptance within the sample of Chicano gang members, demonstrating that insider role status provides a degree of legitimacy (Adler & Adler, 1987) and affords a greater level of trust and openness. As I reviewed the literature to make sense of the insider/outsider perspective and questioned whether the struggles I encountered during the participant recruitment stage were attributable to my outsider status. Yet during an exchange with one participant who expressed some uncertainty about taking part, self-disclosure of my work experience offered the necessary reassurance that influenced his decision to take part. It is possible that I had come to occupy the space between an insider and outsider perspective to build trust with this individual, but wondered whether my ability to be open, authentic and genuinely interested in his experience was of greater value (Corbin, et al., 2018). This highlighted the importance of trust as a foundation for full and accurate disclosure (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) however I missed the opportunity to explore this further due to my preoccupation with securing a sufficient sample. I now recognise that demonstrating greater curiosity in this encounter would have offered a salient learning experience for my own intersubjectivity (Murakami, 2003).

In contrast, another participant would only take part on the condition that his right to anonymity was waived. His attempt to negotiate the terms of his participation sparked reflection on the power dynamics that emerge within research/participant relationships (Grove, 2017). I felt uncomfortable in this situation, torn between my need to recruit an adequate number of participants, adherence to Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) and the need to establish an alliance that was sufficient to explore his experience (Emery & Anderman, 2020). After seeking advice from the University ethics committee, I acquiesced to his request as the benefits of his participation outweighed the additional administrative work. Despite this, I felt increasing dissatisfaction as I became attuned to the wider ramifications. I

was concerned that other participants would retain their right to anonymity and feared the research may present as a promotional piece for the named individual's own organisation. Where he had also requested a copy of the work, I felt an implicit pressure to present the analysis in a particular light and was apprehensive this would impede the broader analytic strategy. Here I became aware of the negative bias I held as a result of the power shift in the participant/researcher relationship. I interpreted his request as an attempt to gain control over the research and experienced a momentary loss of control as I made amendments to suit his needs. Whilst somewhat ashamed of these negative preconceptions, it was important for me to recognise and bracket them before progressing to data analysis to eliminate analytic bias (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Data collection.

Data collection posed unique challenges that I also underestimated. All five participants demonstrated a tendency to describe events rather than explore associated feelings and experiential insights even when probed. This left me feeling hypervigilant, searching for a natural pause to prompt further exploration but constrained by a desire to provide participants with a voice. Interestingly this is a difficulty I face in my clinical work and is an area for professional development, but also represents a missed opportunity to engage in practice exercises with my supervisor to develop my confidence and the necessary skills, something I will consider when embarking on any qualitative research projects in the future.

This experience left me questioning whether the data sufficiently demonstrated participant experience or whether I would uphold a monopoly of interpretation over their statements (Kvale, 2006), a concept that felt quite overwhelming. Reflecting further on

matters of power asymmetry in interview relationships as outlined by Kvale (2006), I wondered if the way participants deflected these questions was a manifestation of 'counter control', a specific strategy exhibited to restore a balance to the hierarchical nature of the dialogue. Familiar with holding control and status over others (as some admitted in their interviews), it is possible that a phenomenological line of questioning elucidated the vulnerabilities of participants and this countermeasure offered participants a change to regain control. Alternatively, this line of questioning may have simply been unfamiliar if capacity for self-reflection was limited. For example, one participant said; "*it's a different line of questioning that I've ever been asked, so it's different…*".

Returning to the matter of reflexivity, listening to the experiences of participants as they battled societal racism throughout their lifetime made me aware of the privilege of my own race and socio-economic status. I became more aware of my position as an outsider, someone with no real understanding or insight into the difficulties they faced, yet this did not appear to hinder the research process. Only Lennox questioned my ability to understand his experience at one point during the interview; "*I don't know if you'd understand it…"* which was the only interview conducted face to face. Perhaps those completing their research interviews over the phone viewed me as a blank canvas and any such differences went unnoticed. Nonetheless I acknowledged that I could not fully understand but hoped to learn so others might gain insight into the difficulties they faced. My own frustrations with the researched paled into insignificance and I became increasingly motivated to offer a voice to these individuals as I explored the meaning of their lived world (Kvale, 2006). This led me to consider the potential benefits of moving onto the analytic stage as collaborative process involving participants. Whilst this may not always be practicable and potentially not an attractive prospect for many, it would allow true retention of the emic perspective and allow

the researcher to fully immerse themselves in the participants' world (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014)

Analysis.

To quote Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.173), "qualitative researches find their lives consumed by their work as they seek understanding and connections". I fully agree with this statement. Completing the analysis was a demanding process, requiring more creativity, cognitive energy and time than I ever anticipated.

With no prior experience of IPA, I found myself relying heavily on the guidance of Smith et al. (2009) alongside supervision where I sought reassurance regarding my ability to complete this level of analysis. Underestimating the extent to which I was required to immerse myself in the data and driven by a desire to feel productive, I progressed through these stages with haste and fell victim to psychological reductionism, with earlier themes reflecting abstract psychological concepts rather than the true nature of participant's experience. As someone who struggles with imagination and creativity, interpretation and extraction of meaning felt incomprehensible and I felt defeated as I returned to the transcripts to review and develop my exploratory comments. However, to my surprise I had greater confidence in my abilities with knowledge of the dataset as whole, representing the nature of the hermeneutic circle. Aware that I had lost sight of the research question during this process, returning to the transcripts with transitions in mind led to the emergence of clear themes which were accompanied by my own feelings of relief that things were falling into place.

I soon became overwhelmed with concepts, themes and related matters of structuring and presenting my ideas through writing. Where Smith et al. (2009) consider writing as an

extension of analysis, Dunleavy (2003, p.26) highlights how writing is also an act of commitment, “a decision to firm up and crystallise what we think”. Making this commitment was psychologically difficult and I was torn between the need to write and gain clarity over the identified themes and constrained by fears about the inaccuracy and inadequacy of my own thoughts. However, with greater awareness of the unrealistic expectations I place upon myself that often hinder my productivity, I reframed the writing process as a stream of consciousness, freeing myself from matters of right and wrong. This was uncomfortable but allowed the interrelatedness of themes to emerge and brought greater clarity to the paper was a whole.

Professional Impact.

At times the notion of transitions felt particularly salient when considering my own professional development over the course of my training. As I entered the role of a trainee forensic psychologist, I sought to reconcile matters of identity, meaning, control and belonging but only felt able to achieve this as I neared the end of the research process. Making the decision to extend my traineeship for the purpose of the research was difficult, especially having entered into a qualified role in February 2020. Extending was unavoidable yet the subsequent delay caused confusion around my professional identity and my role within the service. As Barker et al. (2015) note, researchers and practitioners often have different needs and live in different worlds, something I found true as I found it difficult to transition between these roles in the course of the day. With both tasks requiring significant cognitive energy, the two areas became compartmentalised for some time and I found it difficult to devote attention to both areas. However, as I began to settle into the role and was able to share the tribulations of my journey with clinical supervisors, I became more comfortable balancing this dual role (researcher-practitioner) which ultimately became mutually enriching.

The analytical skills I developed by conducting IPA greatly enhanced my clinical skill set. I began approaching my clinical work from a phenomenological standpoint, focusing more on lived experience and personal meaning within sessions to develop collaborative formulations with clients (Chakraborty, 2020). As my clinical curiosity and reflective capacity developed in parallel with the analysis, I developed greater confidence in my therapeutic style and achieved a sense of control in my enactment of this professional role. Since then I have slowly come to define myself more as a psychologist (identity), derived a sense of purpose through the work I am completing (meaning) and felt greater affinity with the wider clinical team (belonging).

Future Research

Despite the periods of frustration and despair, I emerge with an unexpected desire to continue adding to the story through the production of further research (Barker et al., 2015). This motivation was borne from a sense of achievement and confidence in my ability to navigate the complexities that arose, alongside a desire to continue developing as a qualitative researcher. As I move forward in this area, I will remain attuned to the importance of reflexivity and execute additional strategies to ensure interpretative rigour. For example, I failed to utilise my practice diaries to document a full reflexive account of the analysis in favour of clinical reflections. Now recognising the benefits of such an approach to discover unknown thoughts (Woods, 1999), promote further examination and manipulation of ideas (Maxwell, 1996) and demonstrate the process of knowledge construction (Watt, 2007), I will make greater efforts to utilise a full reflexive journal in the future in order to become a better researcher (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Furthermore, my ability to step back and internalise rather than externalise the negative emotions reflects a significant degree of personal and professional growth. Had I been unable to do this, my attempts to develop rapport with participants would have been limited, hindered data collection and impeded the overall quality and standard of the research. This represents a learning point for the future, where it will be important for me to hold in mind issues of intersubjectivity and my subsequent response.

A Final Statement

As I reach the end of my doctoral journey, I hold a strong sense of achievement at overcoming the demanding feat of qualitative enquiry and am immensely proud at the work produced and my contribution to the literature. The process has altered my sense of identity (Richardson, 2000) where I have come to view myself not only as a practitioner, but as a researcher with greater appreciation for the scientist-practitioner model (Lane & Corrie, 2006). The layers of reflection detailed within this chapter detail the path I have taken to embody this role, yet I remain aware there is no final destination. I am fortunate to be part of a service that provides opportunities to further develop my research skills through active participation in various research methodologies and collaboration with others and as I discover more about theory, the research process and associated methods and paradigms, I look forward to learning more about myself and expanding my perspectives in a way that facilitates personal fulfilment and professional growth.

References

Adams, J. J. & Pizzaro, J. M. (2014). Patterns of specialization and escalation in the criminal careers of gang and non-gang homicide offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 41*(2), 237-235. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854813503637

Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1987). *Qualitative research methods series, Vol. 6. Membership roles in field research.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Akerman, G. A. (2018). Gangs and groups: the impact on therapeutic processes. *Therapeutic Communities*, *39*(1), 50–58. https://doi.org/10.1108/TC-09-2017-0025

Alleyne, E., & Pritchard, E. (2016). Psychological and behavioural characteristics differentiating gang and non-gang girls in the UK. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice.* DOI: 10.1108/JCRPP-05-2015-0017

Alleyne, E., & Wood, J. L. (2012). Gang membership: The psychological evidence. In *Youth Gangs in International Perspective* (pp. 151-168). Springer.

Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(5), 619-644. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00305

Andrews, D. (1995). *The psychology of criminal conduct and effective treatment.* In J. McGuire (Ed.), *Wiley series in offender rehabilitation. What works: Reducing*

reoffending: Guidelines from research and practice (p. 35–62). John Wiley & Sons.

Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Wormith, J. S. (2011). The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model: Does Adding the Good Lives Model Contribute to Effective Crime Prevention? Criminal Justice and Behavior, 38(7), 735–755. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854811406356

Apodaca, T. R., & Longabaugh, R. (2010). Mechanisms of change in motivational interviweing: A review and Preliminary Evaluation of the Evidence. *Addiction*, *104*(5), 705–715. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2009.02527.x.

Aquilino, W. S. (1994). Interview mode effects in surveys of drug and alcohol use: A field experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *58*(2), 210-240. https://doi.org/10.1086/269419

Armstrong, Gary; Rosbrook-Thompson, J. (2016). Faith, Space and Selfhood in East London "Youth Gang" Culture. *The Atlantic*, 590–604. https://doi.org/10.1093/SOCPRO

Armstrong, G., & Rosbrook-Thompson, J. (2017). 'Squashing the Beef': Combatting gang violence and reforming masculinity in East London. *Contemporary Social Science*, *12*(3–4), 285–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2017.1385833

Arocha, M. (2015). Situated Learning and Latino Male Gang Members at Homeboy Industries. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, *October*, 107. http://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1752512435?accou

ntid=12163%5Cnhttp://loyola-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/openurl/01LUC/01LUC_SERVICES?genre=dissertations+%26+theses&issn=&title=Situated+Learning+and+Latino+Male+Gang+

Ashforth, B. (2001). *Role Transitions in Organizational Life: An Identity-Based Perspective.* Routledge

Atkins, S., Lewin, S., Smith, H., Engel, M., Fretheim, A., & Volmink, J. (2008). Conducting a meta-ethnography of qualitative literature: Lessons learnt. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *8*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-21

Bailey, C. E., Smith, C., Huey, S. J., McDaniel, D. D., & Babeva, K. (2014). Unrecognized Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as a treatment barrier for a gang-involved juvenile offender. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *23*(2), 199–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2014.872748

Barker, C., Pistrang, N., & Elliott, R. (2015). *Research methods in clinical psychology: An introduction for students and practitioners*. John Wiley & Sons.

Bauer, J. J., McAdams, D. P., & Sakaeda, A. R. (2005). Crystallization of desire and crystallization of discontent in narratives of life-changing decisions. *Journal of Personality*, *73*(5), 1181–1214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00346.x

Baumeister, R. F. (1994). *The crystallization of discontent in the process of major life change.* In T. F. Heatherton & J. L. Weinberger (Eds.), *Can personality change?* (p.

281–297). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10143-012

Baumeister, R. F., & Lobbestael, J. (2011). Emotions and antisocial behavior. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, *22*(5), 635–649. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2011.617535

Becker, G. (1997). *Disrupted lives: How people create meaning in a chaotic world*. Univ of California Press.

Becker, K., Berry, S. H., Orr, N., & Perlman, J. (2014). *Finding the hard to reach and keeping them engaged in research.* In R. Tourangeau, B. Edwards, T. P. Johnson, K. M. Wolter, & N. Bates (Eds.), *Hard-to-survey populations* (p. 619–641). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139381635.036

Becker, M., Vignoles, V. L., Owe, E., Easterbrook, M. J., Brown, R., Smith, P. B., Abuhamdeh, S., Cendales Ayala, B., Garðarsdóttir, R. B., Torres, A., Camino, L., Bond, M. H., Nizharadze, G., Amponsah, B., Schweiger Gallo, I., Prieto Gil, P., Lorente Clemares, R., Campara, G., Espinosa, A., … Lay, S. (2018). Being oneself through time: Bases of self-continuity across 55 cultures. *Self and Identity*, *17*(3), 276–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2017.1330222

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2), 219–234. doi:10.1177/1468794112468475

Berger, R., Abu-Raiya, H., Heineberg, Y., & Zimbardo, P. (2017). The process of desistance among core ex-gang members. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *87*(4), 487–502. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000196

Berzonsky, M. D. (2016). An exploration of personal assumptions about self-construction and self-discovery. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *16*(4), 267–281. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Blackhart, G. C., Baumeister, R. F., & Twenge, J. M. (2006). *Rejection's impact on self-defeating, prosocial, antisocial, and self-regulatory behaviors.* In K. D. Vohs & E. J. Finkel (Eds.), *Self and relationships: Connecting intrapersonal and interpersonal processes* (p. 237–253). The Guilford Press.

Bloch, H. A., & Niederhoffer, A. (1958). *The gang: A study in adolescent behavior.* Philosophical Library.

Bolger, L. (2019). *Gangs- what can psychology offer?* https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/gangs-what-can-psychology-offer

Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review*. Sage.

Boothby, N., & Thompson, B. (2013). Child soldiers as adults: The Mozambique case study. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 22*(7), 735–756. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/10926671.2013. 814742.

Bortiz, T., Zeifman, R. J. & McMain, S. (2018). Mechanisms of change in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy. In M A. Swales (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy.* Oxford University Press.

Boulton, L. J., Phythian, R., & Kirby, S. (2019). Diverting young men from gangs: a qualitative evaluation. *Policing*, *42*(5), 887–900. https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-04-2019-0043

Bourgois, P. (1990). Confronting anthropological ethics: Ethnographic lessons from Central America. *Journal of Peace Research*, *27*(1), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343390027001005

Bowen, E., Gilchrist, E., & Beech, A. R. (2008). Change in treatment has no relationship with subsequent re-offending in U.K. domestic violence sample: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *52*(5), 598–614. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X08319419

Boxer, P., Kubik, J., Ostermann, M., & Veysey, B. (2015). Gang involvement moderates the effectiveness of evidence-based intervention for justice-involved youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *52*, 26–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.02.012

Bracken, J. A. (2018). Divine-human intersubjectivity and the problem of evil. *Open Theology*, *4*(1), 60–70. https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2018-0005

Braga A.A. (2014) Pulling levers policing. In Bruinsma G., Weisburd D. (eds) E*ncyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5690-2_173

Braga, A. A., Hureau, D., & Winship, C. (2008). Losing Faith? Police, black churches, and the resurgence of youth violence in Boston. *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, *6*(1999), 141–172.

Braga, A. A., Kennedy, D. P., Waring, E. J., & Piehl, A. M. (2001). Problem orientated policing, deterrence and youth violence: An evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *38*(3), 195–225.

Brännström, L., Kaunitz, C., Andershed, A. K., South, S., & Smedslund, G. (2016). Aggression replacement training (ART) for reducing antisocial behavior in adolescents and adults: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *27*, 30–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.02.006

British Psychological Society. (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics. https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf*

Britten, N. (2011). Qualitative research on health communication: what can it contribute?. *Patient education and counseling*, *82*(3), 384-388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2010.12.021

Bruner, J. (1990). *The Jerusalem-Harvard lecture:Acts of meaning.* Harvard University Press.

Bubolz, B. F., & Lee, S. (2019). Putting in work: The application of identity theory to gang violence and commitment. *Deviant Behavior*, *40*(6), 690–702. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2018.1437655

Bulman, M. (2018). Woman who helped dramatically reduce youth murders in Scotland urges London to treat violence as a 'disease'. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-gang-violence-youth-murders-name-scotland-public-health-disease-crime-reduction-a8288596.html

Butler, S., Baruch, G., Hickey, N., & Fonagy, P. (2011). A randomized controlled trial of multisystemic therapy and a statutory therapeutic intervention for young offenders. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *50*(12), 1220–35.e2. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2011.09.017

Canter, D., & Youngs, D. (2015). The LAAF procedure for exploring offenders' narratives. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *54*(3), 219-236. https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12124

Campbell, R., Pound, P., Pope, C., Britten, N., Pill, R., Morgan, M., & Donovan, J. (2003). Evaluating meta-ethnography: a synthesis of qualitative research on lay experiences of diabetes and diabetes care. *Social Science & Medicine (1982)*, *56*(4), 671–684. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536(02)00064-3

Carr, E. C. J., & Worth, A. (2001). The use of the telephone interview for research. *NT Research*, *6*(1), 511–524. https://doi.org/10.1177/136140960100600107

Carroll, C., & Booth, A. (2015). Quality assessment of qualitative evidence for systematic review and synthesis: Is it meaningful, and if so, how should it be performed? *Research Synthesis Methods*, *6*(2), 149–154. https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1128

Carvalho, L. S., & Soares, R. R. (2016). Living on the edge: Youth entry, career and exit in drug-selling gangs. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *121*, 77–98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2015.10.018

Cassidy, T. (2013). *Envrionmental psychology: Behaviour and experience in context*. Psychology Press

Centre for Social Justice. (2009). *Dying to Belong*. https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/DyingtoBelongFullReport.pdf

Centre for Social Justice. (2014). *Girls and Gangs.* https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Girls-and-Gangs-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

Centre for Social Justice. (2018). *It can be stopped.* *https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-*

content/uploads/2018/09/CSJJ6499-Gangs-Report-180911-FINAL-WEB.pdf

Cepeda, A., Valdez, A., & Nowotny, K. M. (2016). Childhood trauma among Mexcian American gang members and delinquent youth: A comparative exploratory study. *Child Abuse Review*, *25*, 205–217. https://doi.org/10.1002/car

Chakraborty, N. (2020). The importance of embedding psychopathology and phenomenology in clinical practice and training in psychiatry. *BJPsych Advances*, *26*(5), 287–295. https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2020.6

Charmaz, K., Irvine, L., & Harris, S. R. (2019). *The social self and everyday life : Understanding the world through symbolic interactionism*. ProQuest Ebook Central https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Chilton, J. M. (2015). Transformation from within: A concept analysis of epiphany. *Creative Nursing,* 21(1), 15-20. https://doi.org/10.1891/1078-4535.21.1.15

Chu, C., Daffern, M., Thomas, S. & Lim, J. (2012). Violence risk and gang affiliation in youth offenders: a recidivism study. *Psychology, Crime and Law, 18* (3), 299-315. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2010.481626

Ciesla, K., Ioannou, M., & Hammond, L. (2019). Women offenders' criminal narrative experience. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, *9*(1), 23–43. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCP-01-2018-0004

Cohen, A. K. (1990). Foreward and Overview. In C. R. Huff (Ed.) *Gangs in America,* (pp. 7-21). Sage.

Connolly-Gibbons, M. B., Crits-Christoph, P., Barber, J. P., Stirman, S. W., Gallop, R., Goldstein, L. A., Temes, C. M., & Ring-Kurtz, S. (2009). Unique and common mechanisms of change across cognitive and dynamic psychotherapies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *77*(5), 801–803. https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.956839

Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human Nature and the Social Order.* Scribner's.

Corbin Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. L. (2018). Reflection/commentary on a past article: "The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research". *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *17*(1), 54–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918788176

Côté, J. E. (2018). The enduring usefulness of Erikson's concept of the identity crisis in the 21st Century: An analysis of student mental health concerns. *Identity*, *18*(4), 251–263. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1524328

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018). 10 questions to help you make sense of qualitative research. Oxford Centre for Triple Value Healthcare, 2018 https://casp-

uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CASP-Qualitative-Checklist-2018.pdf

Crits-Christoph, P., Gallop, R., Diehl, C. K., Beth, M., & Gibbons, C. (2018). Mechanisms of change in cognitive therapy for major depressive disorder in the community mental health setting. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 85*(6), 550–561. https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000198.

Dahlberg, K. (2007). The enigmatic phenomenon of loneliness. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being,* 2(4), 195-207, https://doi.org/10.1080/17482620701626117

Dawson, C. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods: A Practical Guide for Anyone Undertaking a Research Project.* How to Books.

de Hooge, I. E., Zeelenberg, M., & Breugelmans, S. M. (2011). A functionalist account of shame-induced behaviour. *Cognition and Emotion*, *25*(5), 939–946. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2010.516909

Dean, C. The Healthy Identity Intervention: The UK's development of a psychologically informed intervention to address extremist offending in Silke, A (2013). *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. Routledge.

Dearden, L. (2018, November 1). *Serious and organised crime kills more people than terrorism in the UK, warns NCA.* https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-

news/serious-organised-crime-uk-economy-child-abuse-trafficking-drug-dealing-nca-a8611886.html

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). *Self-determination theory.* In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (p. 416–436). Sage Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249215.n21

Decker, S. H., Pyrooz, D. C., & Moule, R. K. (2014). Disengagement from gangs as role Transitions. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *24*(2), 268–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12074

Decker, S. H., and Van Winkle, B. 1996. *Life in the gang: Family, friends, and violence.* Cambridge University Press

DeGrazia, D. (2005). Enhancement technologies and human identity. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy,* 30(3), 261-283. https://doi.org./10.1080/03605310590960166

Densley, J. (2011). Ganging up on gangs: why the gang intervention industry needs an intervention. *The British Journal of Forensic Practice*, *13*(1), 12–23. https://doi.org/10.5042/bjfp.2011.0046

Densley, J. (2013). *How Gangs Work*. Palgrave MacMillan.

Densley, J. A., & Pyrooz, D. C. (2019). A Signaling Perspective on Disengagement from Gangs 1. *Justice Quarterly*, *36*(1), 31–58.

https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2017.1357743

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. (2009). The elephant in the living room: or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. *Qualitative Research*, *9*(2), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794108098034

Deuchar, R. (2018). Religious and spiritual desistance from gangs. In *Gangs and Spirituality: Global Perspectives* (pp. 39–59). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78899-9_3

Deuchar, R., & Weide, R. D. (2019). Journeys in gang masculinity: Insights from international case studies of interventions. *Deviant Behavior*, *40*(7), 851–865. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2018.1443761

Di Placido, C., Simon, T. L., Witte, T. D., Gu, D., & Wong, S. C. P. (2006). Treatment of gang members can reduce recidivism and institutional misconduct. *Law and Human Behavior*, *30*(1), 93–114. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10979-006-9003-6

Dodgson, J. E. (2019). Reflexivity in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, *35*(2), 220–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419830990

Dunkel, C. S. (2000). Possible selves as a mechanism for identity exploration. *Journal of Adolescence*, *23*(5), 519–529. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2000.0340

Dunleavy, P. (2003). *Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation.* Red Globe Press

Eidson, J. L., Roman, C. G., & Cahill, M. (2017). Successes and challenges in recruiting and retaining gang members in longitudinal research: Lessons learned From a multisite social network study. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *15*(4), 396–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204016657395

Elliott, H., Ryan, J., & Hollway, W. (2012). Research encounters, reflexivity and supervision. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *15*(5), 433–444. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2011.610157

Ellis, C. S., & Bochner, A. P. (2006). Analyzing analytic autoethnography: An autopsy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35*(4), 429–449. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606286979

Emery, A., & Anderman, L. H. (2020). Using interpretive phenomenological analysis to advance theory and research in educational psychology. *Educational Psychologist*, *55*(4), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2020.1787170

Esbensen, F. A., & Tusinski, K. E. (2007). Youth gangs in the print media. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, *14*(1), 21–38.

Evans, D., Gruba, P., & Zobel, J. (2011). *How to write a better thesis*. Melbourne University

Publishing.

Fang, A., Steketee, G., Keshaviah, A., Didie, E., Phillips, K. A., & Wilhelm, S. (2020). Mechanisms of change in cognitive behavioral therapy for body dysmorphic disorder. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *44*(3), 596–610. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-020-10080-w

Flores, E. O. (2016). "Grow your hair out": Chicano gang masculinity and embodiment in recovery. *Social Problems*, *63*(4), 590–604. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spw017

Flores, E. O., & Cossyleon, J. E. (2016). "I went through it so you don't have to": Faith-based community organizing for the formerly incarcerated. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *55*(4), 662–676. https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12294

Flores, E. O., & Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2013). Chicano gang members in recovery: The public talk of negotiating Chicano masculinities. *Social Problems*. https://doi.org/Doi 10.1525/Sp.2013.11205

Forster, C., Berthollier, N., & Rawlinson, D. (2014). A systematic review of potential mechanisms of change in psychotherapeutic interventions for personality disorder. *Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy*, *4*(01), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.4172/2161-0487.1000133

Garside, R. (2014) Should we appraise the quality of qualitative research reports for systematic reviews, and if so, how? *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 27(1), 67-79, DOI: 10.1080/13511610.2013.777270

Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). Thinking big with small stories in narrative and identity analysis. *Narrative Inquiry, 16*(1), 122–130. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.16.1.16geo

Gebo, E. (2016). An integrated public health and criminal justice approach to gangs: What can research tell us? *Preventive Medicine Reports*, *4*, 376–380. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.07.007

Gibson, C. L., Swatt, M. L., Miller, J. M., Jennings, W. G., & Gover, A. R. (2012). The causal relationship between gang joining and violent victimization: A critical review and directions for future research. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *40*(6), 490–501. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2012.08.001

Gill, M. J. (2015). Elite identity and status anxiety: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of management consultants. *Organization*, *22*(3), 306–325. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508413514287

Gillespie, A. (2012). Position exchange: The social development of agency. *New Ideas in Psychology*, *30*(1), 32–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2010.03.004

Giordano, P. C., Longmore, M. A., Schroeder, R. D., & Seffrin, P. M. (2008). A life-course perspective on spirituality and desistance from crime. *Criminology*, *46*(1), 99-132.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2008.00104.x

Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., & Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime, and desistance: Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *Effective Interventions in the Lives of Criminal Offenders*, *107*(4), 41–62. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-8930-6_3

Glynn, M. (2014). *Black men, invisibility and crime*. London: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315881874

Goldman, L., Giles, H., & Hogg, M. A. (2014). Going to extremes: Social identity and communication processes associated with gang membership. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, *17*(6), 813–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214524289

Goldman, L., & Hogg, M. A. (2016). Going to extremes for one's group: the role of prototypicality and group acceptance. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *46*(9), 544–553. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12382

Goldstein, A. P., & Glick, B. (1994). Aggression replacement training: Curriculum and evaluation. *Simulation & Gaming*, *25*(1), 9-26.

Goldstein, A. P. (2002). *The psychology of group aggression*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Goodlad, K., Ioannou, M., & Hunter, M. (2019). The criminal narrative experience of psychopathic and personality disordered offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *63*(4), 523–542.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18808433

Gordon, D. A., Graves, K., & Arbuthnot, J. (1995). The effect of Functional Family Therapy for delinquents on adult criminal behavior. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 22(1), 60-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854895022001005

Government, H. (2011). *Ending Gang and Youth Violence : A Cross-Government Report Ending Gang and Youth Violence : A Cross-Government Report*.

Gravel, J., Allison, B., West-Fagan, J., McBride, M., & Tita, G. E. (2018). Birds of a feather fight together: Status-enhancing violence, social distance and the emergence of homogenous gangs. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *34*(1), 189–219. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-016-9331-8

Grof, S., & Grof, C. (1989). *Spiritual emergency: When personal transformation becomes a crisis*. Tarcher/Putnam.

Grove, J. (2017). Researching a marginalised group: Reflections on being an outsider. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, *17*(3), 176–180. https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12120

Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*(5), 748–769. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.5.748

Hagedorn, J. M. (2005). The global impact of gangs. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *21*(2), 153–169. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986204273390

Hallett, M., & McCoy, J. S. (2015). Religiously motivated desistance: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *59*(8), 855–872. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X14522112

Hallsworth, S. (2013). *The gang & beyond: Interpreting violent street worlds.* London: Palgrave MacMillan

Hannes, K (2011). Critical appraisal of qualitative research. In J. Noyes, A. Booth, K. Hannes, A. Harden, J. Harris, S. Lewin, C. Lockwood (Eds.) *Supplementary guidance for inclusion of qualitative research in Cochrane systematic reviews of interventions.* http://cqrmg.cochrane.org/supplemental-handbook-guidance

Hansson, K., Cederblad, M., & Hook, B. (2000). Functional Family Therapy: A method for treating juvenile delinquents. *Socialvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 3, 231-243.

Hardie-Bick, J. (2016). Escaping the self: Identity, group identification and violence. *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, *6*(4), 1032–1052.

Harris, N., & Maruna, S. (2005). Shame, shaming and restorative justice: a critical appraisal. In D. Sullivan & L. Tifft (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice* (pp. 452–462). https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.30.4.254

Hartog, I., Scherer-Rath, M., Kruizinga, R., Netjes, J., Henriques, J., Nieuwkerk, P., Sprangers, M., & van Laarhoven, H. (2020). Narrative meaning making and integration: Toward a better understanding of the way falling ill influences quality of life. *Journal of Health Psychology*, *25*(6), 738–754. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105317731823

Hautala, D. S., J. Sittner, K., & Whitbeck, L. B. (2016). Prospective childhood risk factors for gang involvement among North American indigenous adolescents. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *14*(4), 390–410. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204015585173

Hennigan, K. M., Kolnick, K. A., Vindel, F., & Maxson, C. L. (2015). Targeting youth at risk for gang involvement: Validation of a gang risk assessment to support individualized secondary prevention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *56*, 86–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.07.002

Hennigan, K. & Spanovic, M. (2012). Gang dynamics through the lens of social identity theory. In F. A. Esebensen & C. L. Maxson (Eds.), *Youth Gangs in International Perspective: Results from the Eurogang program of research* (pp. 127-49). Springer

Henretty, J. R., & Levitt, H. M. (2010). The role of therapist self-disclosure in psychotherapy: A qualitative review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *30*(1), 63–77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.09.004

Hermans, H. J. M. (2001). The Dialogical Self: Toward a theory of personal and cultural positioning. *Culture & Psychology*, *7*(3), 243–281. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X0173001

HM Government. (2011). *Ending Gang and Youth Violence.* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-gang-and-youth-violence-cross-government-report

Home Affairs Committee: Serious youth violence, 1 (2019).

Hollin, C. R & Palmer, E. J. (2006). Offending behaviour programmes: controversies and resolutions. In C. R. Hollin & E. J. Palmer (Eds.), *Offending Behaviour Programmes: Development, Application and Controversies* (pp.247-278). John Wiley & Sons.

Horsburgh D. (2003). Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *12*(2), 307–312. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2702.2003.00683.x

Howell, J. C., & Egley, A. (2005). Moving Risk Factors into Developmental Theories of Gang Membership. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *3*(4), 334–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204005278679

Howell, J. (2007). Menacing or Mimicking? Realities of Youth Gangs. *Juvenile Family Court Journal*, 58(2), p.39-50, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-6988.2007.tb00137.x

Howells, K. (1978). The meaning of poisoning to a person diagnosed as a psychopath. *Medicine, Science & the Law*, 8, 179-184

Huey, S. J., J., Henggeler, S. W., Brondino, M. J., & Pickrel, S. G. (2000). Mechanisms of change in multisystemic therapy: Reducing delinquent behavior through therapist

adherence and improved family and peer functioning. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *68*(3), 451.

Ioannou, M., Canter, D., Youngs, D., & Synnott, J. (2015). Offenders' crime narratives across different types of crimes. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, *15*(5), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228932.2015.1065620

Jamal, F., Fletcher, A., Harden, A., Wells, H., Thomas, J., & Bonell, C. (2013). The school environment and student health: A systematic review and meta-ethnography of qualitative research. *BMC Public Health*, *13*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-798

James, M. (2015). *How Do You Tell A "Weasel" from a "Fraggle"? Developing an explanatory model of differential gang membership: A grounded theoretical approach.* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). University of Kent, Kent. Retrieved from https://kar.kent.ac.uk/47983/

Jeong, H., & Othman, J. (2016). Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis from a realist perspective. *The Qualitative Reports, 21*(3), 558-570. h p://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss3/9

Johansson, P., & Høglend, P. (2007). Identifying mechanisms of change in psychotherapy: Mediators of treatment outcome. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, *14*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.514

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, *33*(7), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014

Johnson, B., & Schroeder, C. (2014). Religion, crime, and criminal justice: How does religion matter for crime reduction? *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *June 2016*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935383.013.005

Jolliffe, D., Farrington, D. P., Piquero, A. R., MacLeod, J. F., & van de Weijer, S. (2017). Prevalence of life-course-persistent, adolescence-limited, and late-onset offenders: A systematic review of prospective longitudinal studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *33*, 4–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.01.002

Jonas, E., McGregor, I., Klackl, J., Agroskin, D., Fritsche, I., Holdbrook, C., . . . Quirin, M. (2014). Threat and defense: From anxiety to approach. In Olson, J. M., Zanna, M. P. (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 49, pp. 219–286). Academic Press

Jones, J. L., & Mehr, S. L. (2007). Foundations and assumptions of the scientist-practitioner model. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *50*(6), 766–771. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764206296454

Kassman, P., & Milne, C. (2018). Working with Gangs and Gang Culture: a pilot for Changing the Game. In B. Kahr (Ed.), *New Horizons in Forensic Psychotherapy: Esploring the Work of Estela V. Welldon*. Karnac Books.

Kazdin, A. E. (2007). Mediators and mechanisms of change in psychotherapy research. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *3*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.3.022806.091432

Kerig, P. K., Chaplo, S. D., Bennett, D. C., & Modrowski, C. A. (2016). "Harm as harm": Gang membership, perpetration of trauma, and posttraumatic stress symptoms among youth in the juvenile justice system. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *43*(5), 635–652. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854815607307

Kerpelman, J. L., Pittman, J. F., & Lamke, L. K. (1997). Toward a microprocess perspective on adolescent identity development: An identity control theory approach. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *12*(3), 325-346.

Kidwell, J., Dunham, R. M., Bacho, R. A., Pastorino, E., & Portes, P. R. (1995). Identity exploration: A "crisis" which may go unnoticed in gifted adolescents. *Gifted Child Today*, *18*(1), 18–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/107621759501800107

Kirchmaier, T. and Villa Llera, C. (2018). Murders in London. Centre for Economic Performance, LSE: London.

King, S. (2013). Early desistance narratives: A qualitative analysis of probationers' transitions towards desistance. *Punishment and Society*, *15*(2), 147–165. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474513477790

Klein, M. (2001). Resolving the Eurogang Paradox. In M. W. Klein, H.J. Kerner, C. L. Maxson and E. G. M Weitekamp (Eds.), *The Eurogang Paradox: Street Gangs and Youth Groups in the US and Europe* (pp.7-19). Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Klein, M. W. (2014). Thoughts about street gangs as groups, or always know where the nearest exit lies. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, *17*(6), 701–704. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214548619

Klein, M. W., & Maxson, C. L. (2006). *Street Gang Patterns and Policies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kraemer, H. C., Wilson, G. T., Fairburn, C. G., & Agras, W. S. (2002). Mediators and moderators of treatment effects in randomized clinical trials. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, *59*(10), 877–883. https://doi.org/10.1001/archpsyc.59.10.877

Kubik, J., Docherty, M., & Boxer, P. (2019). The impact of childhood maltreatment on adolescent gang involvement. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *96*, 104096. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104096

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through interviews and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(3), 480–500. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406286235

Lane, D. A., & Corrie, S. (2006). *The modern scientist-practitioner: A guide to practice in psychology.* Routledge.

Lardén, M., Nordén, E., Forsman, M., & Långström, N. (2018). Effectiveness of aggression replacement training in reducing criminal recidivism among convicted adult offenders. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, *28*(6), 476–491. https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.2092

Lauger, T. R. (2020). Gangs, identity, and cultural performance. *Sociology Compass*, *14*(4), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12772

Leichsenring, F., Steinert, C., & Crits-Christoph, P. (2018). On mechanisms of change in psychodynamic therapy. *Zeitschrift Fur Psychosomatische Medizin Und Psychotherapie*, *64*(1), 16–22. https://doi.org/10.13109/zptm.2018.64.1.16

Lemmens, L. H. J. M., Galindo-Garre, F., Arntz, A., Peeters, F., Hollon, S. D., DeRubeis, R. J., & Huibers, M. J. H. (2017). Exploring mechanisms of change in cognitive therapy and interpersonal psychotherapy for adult depression. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *94*, 81–92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2017.05.005

Levers, M. J. D. (2013). Philosophical paradigms, grounded theory, and perspectives on emergence. *SAGE Open*, *3*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013517243

Leverso, J., & Matsueda, R. L. (2019a). Gang Organization and Gang Identity: An Investigation of Enduring Gang Membership. In *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* (Vol. 35, Issue 4). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-019-09408-x

Liberati, A., Altman, D., Tetzlaff, J., Mulrow, C., Getzsche, P., Ioannidis, J., Clarke, M.,

Devereaux, P., Kleijnen, J., & Moher, D. (2009). The PRISMA Statement for Reporting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Studies That Evaluate Health Care Interventions: Explanation and Elaboration. *PLoS Medicine*, *6*(7), 50931. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000100

Linde, C. (1993). *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

London Assembly. (2018). *Mayor launches new public health approach to tackling serious violence.* https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/new-public-health-approach-to-tackling-violence

Maguire, E. R., & Gordon, J. (2015). Faith-based interventions for reducing gang violence in the Caribbean: Reflections from a professor and a priest. In A. Harriott & C. Katz (Eds.), *Gangs in the Caribbean: responses of state and society* (Issue January, pp. 309–338).

Mahoney, G. (2014). *The role of surrogate family dynamics in youth gang recruitment and involvement* (Unpublished thesis). https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/18250/Thesis Final-Mahoney.pdf?sequence=1

Maitra, D. R. (2020). "For me, they were the good old days": Retrospective narratives of childhood experiences in 'the gang.' *Genealogy*, *4*(3), 71. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4030071

Majid, U., & Vanstone, M. (2018). Appraising qualitative research for evidence syntheses: A compendium of quality appraisal tools. *Qualitative Health Research*, *28*(13), 2115–2131. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318785358

Malindi, M. J., & Theron, L. C. (2010). The hidden resilience of street youth. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *40*(3), 318–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124631004000310

Marcia J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *3*(5), 551–558. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954–969. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Martin, C., Frazer, L., Cumbo, E., Hayes, C., & O'Donohuge, K. (2016). Paved with good intentions: The way ahead for voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations. In A. Hucklesby & M. Corcoran (Eds.), *The Voluntary Sector and Criminal Justice* (pp. 15–42). Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137370679

Maruna, S. (1998). *Redeeming one's self: How reformed ex-offenders make sense of their lives.* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). Northwestern University, Illinois. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/35271286_Redeeming_One%27s_Self_How_Reformed_Ex-Offenders_Make_Sense_of_Their_Lives

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making Good.* American Psychological Association

Maruna, S., & Mann, R. (2019). Reconciling 'Desistance' and 'What Works''.' *HM Inspectorate of Probation Academic Insights Series*, *February*, 1–12.

Maruna, S., & Roy, K. (2007). Amputation or reconstruction?: Notes on the concept of "knifing off" and desistance from crime. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *23*(1), 104–124. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986206298951

McAdams, D. P (1993) The Stories We Live by. Guildford Press.

McAdams, D. P. (2011). Narrative Identity. In *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (Issue 1963, pp. 99–115). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9

McAdams, D. P., & de St. Aubin, E. (Eds.). (1998). *Generativity and adult development: How and why we care for the next generation.* American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10288-000

McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *22*(3), 233–238. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622

McCall, G. J & Simmons, J. L. (1978). *Identities and Interactions.* Free Press

McCoyd, J. L. M., & Kerson, T. S. (2006). Conducting intensive interviews using email: A serendipitous comparative opportunity. *Qualitative Social Work*, *5*(3), 389–

406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325006067367

Meng Chu, C., Daffern, M., Thomas, S. D. m., & Ying Lim, J. (2011). Elucidating the treatment needs of gang affiliated youth offenders. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, *3*(3), 129–140. https://doi.org/10.1108/17596591111154167

Mesquita, B., Barrett, L. F., & Smith, E. R. (Eds.). (2010). The mind in context. Guilford Press.

Mieczkowski, T. (1986). Geeking up and throwing down: Heroin street life in Detroit. *Criminology*, *24*(4), 645-666. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1986.tb01506.x

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage.

Mørck, L. (2014). ″Learning to live": Expansive learning and mo(ve)ments beyond ’gang exit’. *Boulder, CO: International Society of the Learning Sciences.*

Munn, Z., Stern, C., Aromataris, E., Lockwood, C., & Jordan, Z. (2018). What kind of systematic review should I conduct? A proposed typology and guidance for systematic reviewers in the medical and health sciences. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*(1), 5. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-017-0468-4

Murakami, K. (2003). Orientation to the Setting: Discursively Accomplished

Intersubjectivity. *Culture & Psychology*, *9*(3), 233–248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X030093005

National Crime Agency. (2012). *County Lines, Violence, Exploitation & Drugs Supply*. Retrieved from http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/832-county-lines-violence-exploitation-and-drug-supply-2017/file

National Gang Centre. (n.d). *Aggressive Behaviour Control Programme.* https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/spt/Programs/144

Needs, A., & Adair-Stantiall, A. (2018). The social context of transition and rehabilitation. In Akerman, G., Needs, A., & Bainbridge, C. (Eds.) *Transforming Environments and Offender Rehabilitation: A Guide for Practitioners in Forensic Settings and Criminal Justice.* Routledge.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *8*(2), 90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Noblit, G. W., & Hare, R. D. (1988). *Meta-ethnography: Synthesizing qualitative studies* (Vol. 11). Sage.

Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: An appropriate methodology for educational research? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, (1), 75–83.

Novick G. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research?. *Research in Nursing & Health*, *31*(4), 391–398. https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20259

Nugent, B., & Schinkel, M. (2016). The pains of desistance. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *16*(5), 568–584. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895816634812

Nydegger, L. A., DiFranceisco, W., Quinn, K. & Dickenson-Gomex (2016). Gender norms and age-disparate sexual relationships as predictors of intimate partner violence, Sexual violence, and risky sex among adolescent gang members. *Journal of Urban Health, 94 (*2), 266-275.

O'Connor, C., Kadianaki, I., Maunder, K., & McNicholas, F. (2018). How does psychiatric diagnosis affect young people's self-concept and social identity? A systematic review and synthesis of the qualitative literature. *Social Science and Medicine*, *212*(July), 94–119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.07.011

O'Connor, R. M., & Waddell, S. (2015). *What Works to Prevent Gang Involvement, Youth Violence and Crime*. https://www.eif.org.uk/report/what-works-to-prevent-gang-involvement-youth-violence-and-crime-a-rapid-review-of-interventions-delivered-in-the-uk-and-abroad

Oyserman, D., Elmore, K., & Smith, G. (2012). *Handbook of Self and Identity* (M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (eds.); pp. 69–104). The Guildford Press.

Palaganas, E., Sanchez, M.C., Molintas, M.V., & Caricativo, R. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. *The Qualitative Report, 22*, 426-438.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. (2019). *Early Interventions to Reduce Violent Crime.* (Issue 599). https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/POST-PN-0599

Paternoster, R., & Bushway, S. (2009). Desistance and the feared self: Toward an identity theory of criminal desistance. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, *99*(4), 1103–1156.

Patnaik, E. (2013). Reflexivity: Situating the researcher in qualitative research. *Humanities and Social Science Studies*, *2*(2), 98–106. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263916084

Pawelz, J. (2018). Researching gangs: How to reach hard-to-reach populations and negotiate tricky issues in the field. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *19*(1). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-19.1.2878

Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Pawson, R., Greenhalgh, T., Harvey, G., & Walshe, K. (2005). Realist review: A new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions. *Journal of Health Services Research &Policy*, *10 Suppl 1*, 21–34. https://doi.org/10.1258/1355819054308530

Pearson, A. (2004). Balancing the evidence: incorporating the synthesis of qualitative data into systematic reviews. *JBI Reports*, *2*(2), 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1479-6988.2004.00008.x

Pedersen, M. L. (2014). Gang joining in Denmark: Prevalence and correlates of street gang membership. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, *15*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/14043858.2014.886892

Pemberton, A., Aarten, P. G. M., & Mulder, E. (2019). Stories as property: Narrative ownership as a key concept in victims' experiences with criminal justice. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *19*(4), 404–420. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895818778320

Perrin, C., & Blagden, N. (2014). Accumulating meaning, purpose and opportunities to change "drip by drip": the impact of being a listener in prison. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, *20*(9), 902–920. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2014.888429

Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., & Esbensen, F. (2004). Gang membership and violent victimization. *Justice Quarterly, 21*, 794–815. doi:10.1080/07418820400095991

Petre, M. & Rugg, G. (2010). *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research.* Open University Press.

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2014). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne Psychological Journal*, *20*(1), 7–14. https://doi.org/10.14691/cppj.20.1.7

Pitts. J. (2008). *Reluctant Gangsters: The Changing Face of Youth Crime.* Willan.

Pitts, J. (2017). Whatever happened to the family? England's new gang strategy. *Safer Communities*, *16*(1), 32–40. https://doi.org/10.1108/SC-11-2016-0020

Pyrooz, D. C. (2014). "From your first cigarette to your last dyin' day": The patterning of gang membership in the life-course." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *30*(2), 349–372. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-013-9206-1

Pyrooz, D. C., & Decker, S. H. (2011). Motives and methods for leaving the gang: Understanding the process of gang desistance. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *39*(5), 417–425. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2011.07.001

Pyrooz, D. C., Decker, S. H., & Webb, V. J. (2014). The ties that bind: Desistance from gangs. *Crime & Delinquency*, *60*(4), 491–516. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128710372191

Quinn, K., Pacella, M. L., Dickson-Gomez, J., & Nydegger, L. A. (2017). Childhood adversity and the continued exposure to trauma and violence among adolescent gang members. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *59*(1–2), 36–49. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12123

Raby, C., & Jones, F. (2016). Identifying risks for male street gang affiliation: a systematic review and narrative synthesis. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*,

27(5), 601–644. https://doi.org/10.1080/14789949.2016.1195005

Randhawa-Horne, K., Horan, R., & Sutcliffe, P. (2019). *Identity Matters intervention for group and gang related offenders in custody and community : findings from a small-scale process study*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818633/identity-matters-intervention-for-group-and-gang-related-offenders.pdf

Ratner, C. (2008). Cultural psychology and qualitative methodology: Scientific and political considerations. *Culture & Psychology*, *14*(3), 259–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X08088557

Regan, P. (1996). The search for family: Adolescent males' motives for joining gangs. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*, *24*(1), 25–27.

Renner, F., DeRubeis, R., Arntz, A., Peeters, F., Lobbestael, J., & Huibers, M. J. H. (2018). Exploring mechanisms of change in schema therapy for chronic depression. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, *58*(September 2017), 97–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2017.10.002

Ricoeur, P. (1995). *Oneself as Another*. University of Chicago Press.

Roberts, L. M., & Creary, S. J. (2012). Positive identity construction: Insights from classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives. *The Oxford Handbook of Positive*

Organizational Scholarship. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199734610.013.0006

Rocque, M., Posick, C., & Paternoster, R. (2016). Identities through time: An exploration of identity change as a cause of desistance. *Justice Quarterly*, *33*(1), 45–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2014.894111\

Roman, C. G., Decker, S. H., & Pyrooz, D. C. (2017). Leveraging the pushes and pulls of gang disengagement to improve gang intervention: findings from three multi-site studies and a review of relevant gang programs. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, *40*(3), 316–336. https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2017.1345096

Ross, L., & Arsenault, S. (2018). Problem analysis in community violence assessment: revealing early childhood trauma as a driver of youth and gang violence. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *62*(9), 2726–2741. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17734798

Routledge, C., Arndt, J., Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T. (2008). A blast from the past: The terror management function of nostalgia. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 132–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2006.11.001

Russell, G. M. & Kelly, N. H. (2002).Research as interacting dialogical processes: Implications for reflexivity. *Qualitative Social Research,* 3(3), http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-3.3.831

Saldaña, J. (2018). Researcher, analyze thyself. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*,

17(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918801717

Schlenker, B. R. (2011. Self-Presentation. In Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (Eds.). *Handbook of self and identity, second edition*. ProQuest Ebook Central https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Schütz, A. (1962). Collected papers, The problem of social reality (Vol. 1). *The Hague, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff*.

Schwartz, J. S. (2002). In search of mechanisms of change in identity development: Integrating the constructivist and discovery perspectives on identity. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *2*(4), 317–339. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XID0204

Schwartz, S. J. (2006). Predicting identity consolidation from self-construction, eudaimonistic self-discovery, and agentic personality. *Journal of Adolescence*, *29*(5), 777–793. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2005.11.008

Schwartz, S. J., Dunkel, C. S., & Waterman, A. S. (2009). Terrorism: An identity theory perspective. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 32, 537-559. https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100902888453

Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Arndt, J., & Routledge, C. (2008). Nostalgia: Past, present, and future. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*(5), 304–307.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00595.x

Sexton, T., & Turner, C. W. (2010). The effectiveness of functional family therapy for youth with behavioral problems in a community practice setting. *Journal of Family Psychology, 24*(3), 339–348. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019406

Short, J. F. & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1965). *Group Process and Gang Delinquency.* University Chicago Press

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, method and research.* Sage Publications.

Smith, D. & Grierson, J. (2018). Donald Trump Says London hospital is like "war zone" because of knife crime. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/04/trump-nra-london-hospital-knives

Smithson, H., & Ralphs, R. (2016). Youth in the UK: 99 problems but the gang ain't one? *Safer Communities*, *15*(1), 11–23. https://doi.org/10.1108/SC-10-2015-0034

Stefanakis, H. (2008). Caring and compassion when working with offenders of crime and violence. *Violence and Victims*, *23*(5), 652–661. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.23.5.652

Stevens, A. (2012). "I am the person now I was always meant to be": Identity reconstruction and narrative reframing in therapeutic community prisons. *Criminology and Criminal*

Justice, *12*(5), 527–547. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895811432958

Stone, R. (2016). Desistance and identity repair: Redemption narratives as resistance to stigma. *British Journal of Criminology*, *56*(5), 956–975. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv081

Stretesky, P. B., & Pogrebin, M. R. (2007). Gang-related gun violence: Socialization, identity, and self. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606287416

Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version.* Benjamin Cumming

Sveinsson, K. (2008) *A tale of two Englands: 'Race' and violent crime in the media.* London: The Runnymede Trust

Swann, W. B., & Bosson, J. K. (2010). Self and Identity. In *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Issue November 2017). https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470561119.socpsy001016

Sweet, L. (2002). Telephone interviewing: is it compatible with interpretive phenomenological research?. *Contemporary Nurse*, *12*(1), 58-63. https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.12.1.58

Sweeten, G., Pyrooz, D. C., & Piquero, A. R. (2013). Disengaging from gangs and desistance from crime. *Justice Quarterly*, *30*(3), 469–500.

https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.723033

Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of inter-group differentiation. In H. Tajfel (Ed.) *Differentiation between social groups* (pp. 77–100). Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-37). Brooks/Cole.

Tangney, J. P., Stuewig, J., & Mashek, D. J. (2007). Moral emotions and moral behavior. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *58*, 345-372. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070145

Tanyi, R. A. (2006). Spirituality and family nursing: Spiritual assessment and interventions for families. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 53*(3), 287–294. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03731.x

Taylor, T. J., Freng, A., Esbensen, F., & Peterson, D. (2008). Youth gang membership and serious violent victimization: The importance of lifestyles and routine activities. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*, 1441–1464. doi:10.1177/0886260508314306

Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic growth : Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence. *Psychological Inquiry*, *15*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1501

Tkazky, S. (2018). *Prisoners "Life As A Film"* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Huddersfield.

Thompson, N. (2019). 'It's a no-win scenario, either the police or the gang will get you': Young people and organised crime – vulnerable or criminal? *Youth Justice*, *19*(2), 102–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225419843353

Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., Smith, C., & Tobin, K. (2003). *Gangs and delinquency in developmental perspective.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Thrasher, F. (1967). *The gang*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tongco, D. C. (2007). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research & Applications*, 5, 147-158. https://doi.org/10.17348/era.5.0.147-158

Tonks, S. (2018). *Understanding Street Gang Membership* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Birmingham.

Tonks, S., & Stephenson, Z. (2019). Disengagement from street gangs: a systematic review of the literature. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, *26*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2018.1482574

Toye, F., Seers, K., Allcock, N., Briggs, M., Carr, E., & Barker, K. (2014). Meta-ethnography 25 years on: Challenges and insights for synthesising a large number of qualitative

studies. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *14*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-14-80

Tuffour, I. (2017). A critical overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A contemporary qualitative research approach. *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, *02*(04), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.4172/2472-1654.100093

Urrieta, L., & Noblit, G. W. (2018). *Cultural constructions of identity : meta-ethnography and theory*. https://bibdata.princeton.edu/bibliographic/10786824

Ungar, M. (2004). *Nurturing hidden resilience in troubled youth*. University of Toronto Press.

Valasik, M., & Reid, S. E. (2020). Taking Stock of Gang Violence: An Overview of the Literature. In M. B. Greene, B. Johnson & L. Degutis (Eds.) *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence Across the Lifespan*. Springer Science/Nature https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62122-7

Vaughan, B. (2007). The internal narrative of desistance. *British Journal of Criminology*, *47*(3), 390–404. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azl083

Venkatesh, S. A. (1997). The social organization of street gang activity in an urban ghetto. *American Journal of Sociology*, *103*(1), 82-111.

Vigil, J. D. (1988). Group processes and street identity: Adolescent Chicano gang

members. *Ethos*, *16*(4), 421-445.

Waddell, S., & Jones, N. (2018). *Intervening Early To Prevent Gang and Youth Violence: the Role of Primary Schools*. *MARCH*, 1–44. http://www.eif.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/intervening-early-gang-youth-violence-primary-schools_March2018.pdf

Wagner, D. V., Borduin, C. M., Sawyer, A. M., & Dopp, A. R. (2014). Long-term prevention of criminality in siblings of serious and violent juvenile offenders: a 25-year follow-up to a randomized clinical trial of multisystemic therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *82*(3), 492–499. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035624

Wagoner, J. A., & Hogg, M. A. (2017). Uncertainty-Identity Theory. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 1–8). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1195-1

Ward, T., & Marshall, B. (2007). Narrative identity and offender rehabilitation. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *51*(3), 279–297. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X06291461

Ward, T., Rose, C., & Willis, G. (2012). Offender rehabiliation: Good lives, desistance and risk reduction. In G. Davies & A. Beech (Eds.) *Forensic Psychology: Crime, Justice, Law, Interventions* (pp. 407-423). John Wiley & Sons.

Waterman, A. (1990). Personal expressiveness: Philosophical and psychological foundations. In *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, *11*(1), 47–73.

Waterman, A. S., Schwartz, S. J., Goldbacher, E., Green, H., Miller, C., & Philip, S. (2003). Predicting the subjective experience of intrinsic motivation: The roles of self-determination, the balance of challenges and skills, and self-realization values. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *29*(11), 1447-1458. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203256907

Watt, D. (2007). The qualitative report on becoming a qualitative researcher: The value of reflexivity recommended APA citation on becoming a qualitative researcher: The value of reflexivity. *The Qualitative Report*, *12*(121), 82–101. http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr%5Cnhttp://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol12/iss1/5

Webb H.S. (2014). Spiritual emergence. In: Leeming D.A. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6086-2_770

Wegerhoff, D., Dixon, L., & Ward, T. (2019). The conceptualization of gangs: Changing the focus. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *47*, 58–67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2019.03.004

Welsh, B. C., Braga, A. A., & Sullivan, C. J. (2014). Serious youth violence and innovative prevention: on the emerging link between public health and criminology. *Justice Quarterly*, *31*(3), 500-523. https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2012.690441

Willmott, D., & Ioannou, M. (2017). A narrative based model of differentiating rioters. *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, *56*(1), 105–124. https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12194

Wilson, J. L. (2014). *Sanctuary of Meaning*. Universty of Minnesota Publishing.

Windle, J. and Briggs, D. (2015). Going Solo: The social organisation of drug dealers within a London gang. *Journal of Youth Studies, 18* (9), 1170-1185. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2015.1020925

White, W.L. (2000) *Toward a New Recovery Movement: Historical Reflections on Recovery, Treatment and Advocacy*. Retrieved 2 December 2001, from http://www.unhooked.com/sep/wmwhite_advocacy21.pdf.

Whitehead, P. L. (2013). Touching the void: Community chaplaincy as an ethical-cultural agency in criminal justice re-formation in England and Wales. *Social and Public Policy Review, 7*(1), 40–54.

Wong, J., Gravel, J., Bouchard, M., Morselli, C., & Descormiers, K. (2012). *Effectiveness of street gang control strategies : a systematic review and meta-analysis of evaluation studies* (Issue January). https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1314.4086

Woods, P. (1999). *Successful writing for qualitative researchers.* London: Routledge.

Wood, J., & Alleyne, E. (2010). Street gang theory and research: Where are we now and

where do we go from here? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *15*(2), 100–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2009.08.005

Wood, J. L. (2014). Understanding gang membership: The significance of group processes. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *17*(6), 710–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214550344

Wood, J. L. (2019). Confronting gang membership and youth violence: Intervention challenges and potential futures. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, *29*(2), 69–73. https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.2113

Wood, J., & Dennard, S. (2017). Gang membership: links to violence exposure, paranoia, PTSD, anxiety and forced control of behavior in prison. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes*, *80*, 30-41. doi:10.1080/00332747.2016.1199185

Wurf, E., & Markus, H. (1991). *Possible selves and the psychology of personal growth.* In D. J. Ozer, J. M. Healy, Jr., & A. J. Stewart (Eds.), *Perspectives in personality, Vol. 3. Part A: Self and emotion; Part B: Approaches to understanding lives* (p. 39–62). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Yaneva, M., Ioannou, M., Hammond, L., & Synnott, J. (2018). Differentiating contract killers: A narrative-based approach. *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, *57*(1), 107–123. https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12243

Yesberg, J., & Polaschek, D. (2019). How does offender rehabilitation actually work?

Exploring mechanisms of change in high-risk treated parolees. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *63*(15–16). https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X19856221

Youngs, D., & Canter, D. V. (2012). Narrative roles in criminal action: An integrative framework for differentiating offenders. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, *17*(2), 233–249. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8333.2011.02011.x

Zittoun, T. (2007). Dynamics of Interiority. In *Otherness in Question: Development of the Self* (pp. 1–8).

Appendices

Appendix A. CASP Questions

Section A: Are the results valid?

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Section B: What are the results?

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?

Section C: Will the results help locally?

10. How valuable is the research?

Appendix B.

Evaluation of Study Quality

CASP evaluation of study quality

Study	Statement of Research Aims	Appropriate Qual. Method	Research Design	Recruitment Strategy	Appropriateness of data collection	Researcher-Participant Relationship Considered	Ethical Considerations	Rigorous Data Analysis	Clear Statement of Findings
Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016	C	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	N	C	C
Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson, 2017	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	N	C	N	N
Arocha, 2015	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	Y
Deuchar, Søgaard, Kolind, Thylstrup and Wells , 2016	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	C	Y
Deuchar and Weide, 2019	Y	Y	Y	C	Y	C	C	C	Y
Geraghty and Akerman, 2017 (considered with Akerman, n.d)	C	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	Y

Flores, 2016	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	C	Y
Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013	Y	Y	C	N	Y	Y	N	C	Y
Mørck, 2014	Y	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Randhawa-Horne et al., 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	C	Y	Y

Appendix C.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Stage	Question	Probe
INTRODUCTION	Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview for this project which forms part of the research for a Professional Doctorate. I will be conducting 6 interviews. I have already provided you with some information about the project, as well as giving you contact details for the University and me should you have any further queries. You have also signed a consent form agreeing to take part today. I would like to ask permission to audio record this interview. The reason for this is to have the set of accurate data (your responses), and ensure I can be present and engage in the interview without being distracted by scribbling notes. Your responses will be transcribed later on by myself, and then analysed along with other transcripts from other interviews I will be conducting through the course of the project. Your identity will be anonymised as of now, I will be giving you a pseudonym. There will be no identifying any featured in my thesis, so whilst I want you to talk openly, if you mention any identifying place names, locations, people etc, these	

	will also be anonymised. I will most likely discuss your contribution with my supervisor at the University prior to publication. The recording and the transcript will be securely stored and may be made open to the public once the research has been completed. Invite any questions.	
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH	I am conducting research into individual experiences of gang membership. I am interested in understanding how you made sense of your experience within the gang, and how that influenced your perceptions of who you are. I am also interested in understanding more about the changes in identity you may have experienced after you left the gang.	
Question 1	Can we start by exploring how you would define a gang?	Explore their definition of a gang member. Explore how their perception of the gang has changed over time. If so, how? Ascertain what informed their perceptions of the gang.
Question 2	Tell me about your life before you joined the gang?	Explore self-identity – how would you have described yourself? How did others describe you? What was important for you? Explore idea of future self – what were your goals and aspirations
Question 3	Why did you join a gang?	Explore the push and pull factors.

		What did gang membership offer you?
Question 4	What did gang membership mean to you?	How did joining the gang make you feel? How important were other roles that you may have held?
Question 5	How did gang membership affect your relationship with others?	Explore relationships with others in the gang and external to it.
Question 6	Did your role in the gang change over time? What were the reasons for this?	What responsibilities did these bring? How did you feel?
Question 7	What came to be your main role?	Explore associated responsibilities and feelings
Question 8	How did others in the gang see you?	Explore relationship with other gang members.
Question 9	Tell me about your activities in the gang, including things that would have been against the law?	Explore patterns of offending whilst in the gang. How did that make you feel? Did your offending influence how you perceived yourself?
Question 10	Why did you stay in the gang?	Possible topics to explore: • Personal gain • Fear • Status • Enjoyment/thrill
Question 11	Did the meaning of gang membership to you change over time?	In what way?
Question 12	When did you first think about leaving the gang?	Explore triggers and reasons in further detail. How did that make you feel?
Question 13 (if applicable)	What led you to become dissatisfied with the gang?	Explore thoughts and feelings around gang related offending and relationships. How did that make you feel?

		How did that affect your relationships with others in the gang?
Question 14	What were your reasons for leaving the gang?	What motivated you to leave the gang?
Question 15	How difficult was it to leave the gang?	Why was that? How did leaving the gang make you feel?
Question 16	How did you see yourself after you left the gang?	
Question 17	What does that part of your life mean to you now?	

Appendix D.

FORM UPR16

Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information

Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information			**Student ID:**	UP880066
PGRS Name:	Laura Bolger			
Department:	Psychology	**First Supervisor:**	Dr Adrian Needs	
Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)	**February 2018**			
Study Mode and Route:	Part-time ☐ Full-time ☒	MPhil ☐ PhD ☐	MD ☐ Professional Doctorate ☒	

Title of Thesis:	An Identity Based Perspective on Gangs: A Qualitative Exploration of the Psychological Processes of Change Involved in Gang Related Transitions
Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)	30,194

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/)

a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES ☒ NO ☐
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES ☒ NO ☐
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES ☒ NO ☐
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES ☒ NO ☐
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES ☒ NO ☐

Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):	SFEC 2018 – 132B

If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed *(PGRS)*:	**Date:** 21/11/2020

Appendix E. Participant Information Sheet

Department of Psychology

King Henry Building
Portsmouth
PO1 2DY

Researcher: Laura Bolger
up880066@myport.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Adrian Needs
Adrian.needs@port.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title: An exploration of the identity of gang members across a series of role transitions within the gang

You have kindly agreed to consider taking part in my research study and I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please feel free to talk to others about the study if you wish and do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of the study is to provide a deeper understanding of individual experiences of gang membership. I am interested in understanding how you made sense of your experience within the gang, and how that influenced your perceptions of who you are. I am also interested in understanding more about the changes in identity you may have experienced after you left the gang.

Why have I been invited?
Because of the nature of the research, I am interested in speaking to individuals who have lived experience as a gang member.

Do I have to take part?
Participation is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide to join the study. When we meet I will take you through the study, explain the contribution you will be asked to make and then I will then ask you to sign a consent form if you wish to proceed. If you do not feel comfortable talking about your experience within a gang then that is fine.

What will happen to me if I take part?
I would like to conduct an interview with you, which will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Subject to your consent I will make an audio recording of the interview and will later transcribe that so that I can compare and analyse the various responses from all of the interviews I will conduct. Whilst the interview will be stored with a reference to help me identify your name, after the data has been analysed and if your data appears in my final thesis, it will be entirely anonymous. I expect that my research will take another year to finish but your involvement will be limited to the interview process.

Following the interview, I will ask if you know of anyone else who you think may be willing to take part in the research project. If you do not know anyone, or do not wish to speak about your participant in the project with others then that is fine.

Are there any risks/disadvantages or benefits of taking part?

No significant risks or disadvantages have been identified by taking part. Speaking about your experience may be difficult for you and as such there may be personal disadvantages in terms of your own emotional wellbeing, however appropriate support will be offered following the interview.

There will be no monetary rewards or compensation for taking part, but you will be contributing to research that may influence future gang prevention strategies.

During the interview, I would like to talk about your experiences of criminal activities. This will remain confidential, however if you disclose possible criminal offences during the interview that have not yet been investigated or prosecuted, the researcher may be required to report the matter to relevant agencies.

Will my taking part in the study be confidential?
Yes. You will be given pseudonym for the purpose of the research and no personal identifying information will be made available to others. If during the interview you mention any identifying locations, or gang names then these will be anonymised when the interviews are typed up. When you join the study, it is possible that some of the data collected could be seen by authorised persons from the University of Portsmouth or regulatory authorities. Because my research is supervised, others may look at the data to check that the study is being carried out correctly but they will not be able to view any identifying information. Once the study has been completed, elements may be submitted for publication to academic journals or may be presented at conferences. In any case, the data will remain anonymous.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
You are welcome to end your participation in the study at any point if you change your mind and decide that you no longer wish to take part. After your interview has finished, you will have a one week 'cooling off period' during which time you will be able to contact me with your pseudonym and ask for your responses to be removed from the project. However, once I begin the analysis, your data may have been integrated with other responses and so will be difficult to remove from the study.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, speak to myself in the first instance if this is appropriate. If you have a complaint, you can contact my supervisor Dr Adrian Needs using the email above, or alternatively contact the chair of the department Ethics Committee (paul.morris@port.ac.uk) or the Head of Department, Psychology - Dr James Ost (james.ost@port.ac.uk). If your complaint is not resolved, you can contact the University Complaints Officer (t: 023 9284 3642, e: complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk).

What will happen to the results of the research study?
If you are willing to provide me with contact details I will be able to notify you when the study is complete, although this is unlikely to be for another year. You will not be identified in any report or publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The University of Portsmouth is sponsoring my research.

Who has reviewed the study?
Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and approved.

Concluding statement
Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and I look forward to speaking to you.

Appendix F. Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An identity based perspective on gangs

Name and Contact Details of Student: Laura Bolger – up880066@myport.ac.uk

Name and Contact Details of Supervisor: Dr Adrian Needs – Adrian.needs@port.ac.uk

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. ☐

3. I understand that data collected during this study, *could* be requested and looked at by appropriate staff (e.g. supervisors, external examiners). I give my permission for any authority, with a legal right of access, to view data which might identify me. ☐

4. I understand that the results of this study may be published and / or presented at meetings or academic conferences. I give my permission for my anonymous data, which does not identify me, to be disseminated in this way. ☐

5. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been approved by a Research Ethics Committee. ☐

6. I consent for my interview to be audio recorded. The recording will be transcribed and analysed for the purposes of the research ☐

7. I consent to verbatim quotes being used in publications; I will not be named but I understand that there is a risk that I could be identified. ☐

8. I understand that should I disclose any concerns with regard to my own, or others' professional practice in the course of the interview, the researcher might be duty bound to refer the matter to relevant agencies. ☐

9. I understand that should I disclose possible criminal offences that have not been investigated or prosecuted, in the course of the interview, the researcher may report the matter(s) to relevant agencies. ☐

10. I would like to receive further information about the results of the study. (Add further information regarding the format of the results, e.g. personal or those relating to the study as a whole). ☐

11. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant: **Date:** **Signature:**

Name of Person taking Consent: **Date:** **Signature:**

***Note**: When completed, one copy to be given to the participant, one copy to be retained in the study file*

Appendix G.

Disclaimer: Waiver of Right to Anonymity

Department of Psychology
King Henry Building
Portsmouth
PO1 2DY

Researcher: Laura Bolger
up880066@myport.ac.uk
Supervisors: Dr Adrian Needs
Adrian.needs@port.ac.uk
Dr Dominic Pearson
Dominic.pearson@port.ac.uk

DISCLAIMER

Study title: An exploration of the perceptions of ex-gang members regarding their former identity within a gang.

I confirm that I have read the consent form and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I understand that by taking part in the research I have a right to anonymity. However I wish to waive my right to anonymity and would like to be identified within the write up of the project. I understand that this will include identification as part of the researcher's final thesis, any publication to academic journals and in at any conferences where the researcher may present the research.

I confirm that I am happy to be identified in this research project.

Name of Participant: Signature:

Person taking consent: Signature: